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QWAN
怪·力·乱·神
TOKYOPOP
1
AKI SHIMIZU

怪・力・乱・神 ロマン

クワン

1

QWAN™

Volume 1

By
Aki Shimizu

TOKYOPOP

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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WHEN THE WORLD WAS STILL PURE AND AS FRAGILE AS A BIRD'S EGG, THE BEING KNOWN AS P'AN KU WAS BORN. AS P'AN KU GREW OVER THE NEXT 18,000 YEARS, THE HEAVENS WERE SPLIT FROM THE EARTH. THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF YIN AND YANG, THE MOON AND THE SUN. THEN HUMANS WERE BORN, AND YIN AND YANG LEFT THE EARTH'S CONTROL TO THEM. THUS BEGAN HISTORY...

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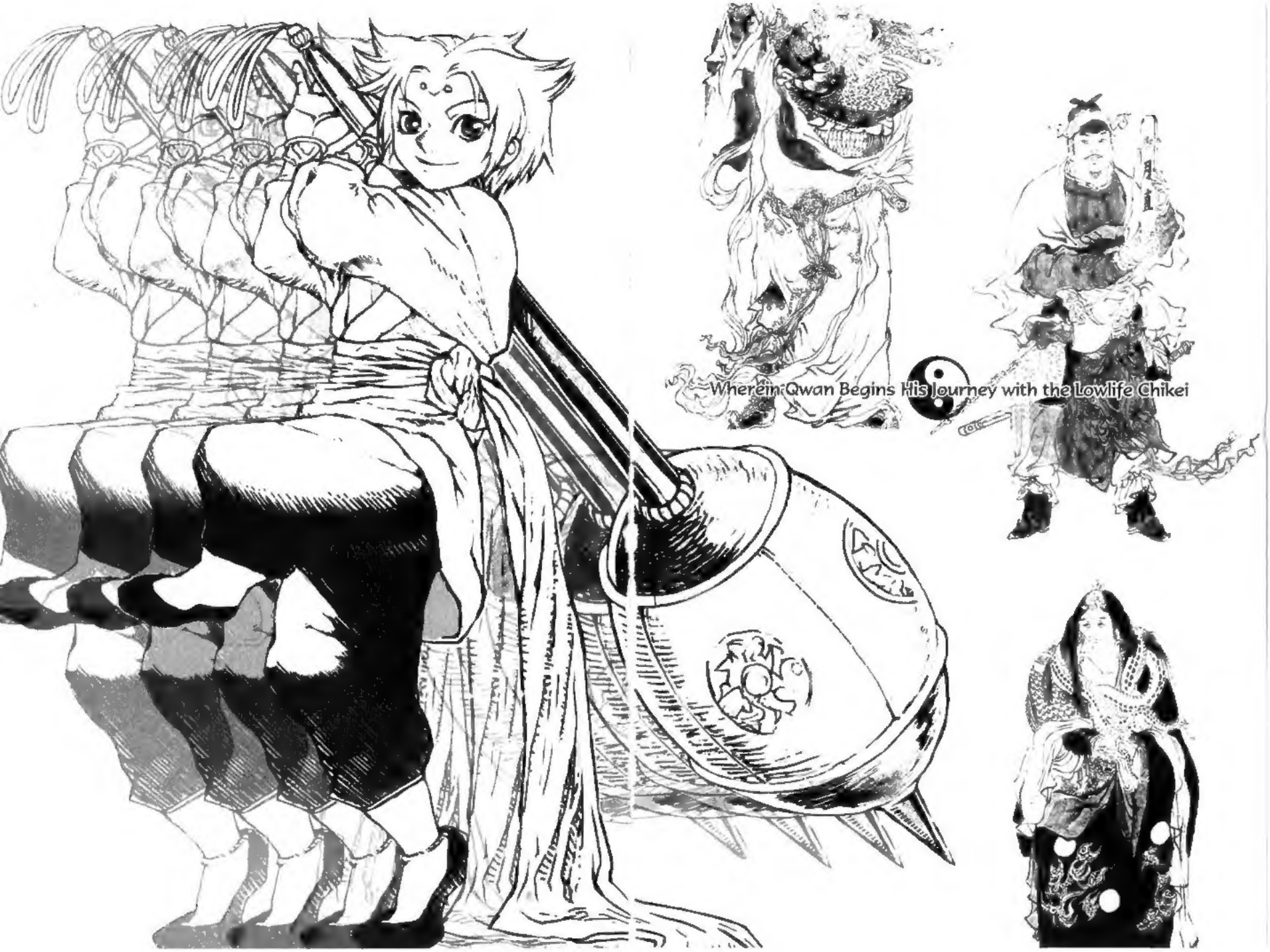
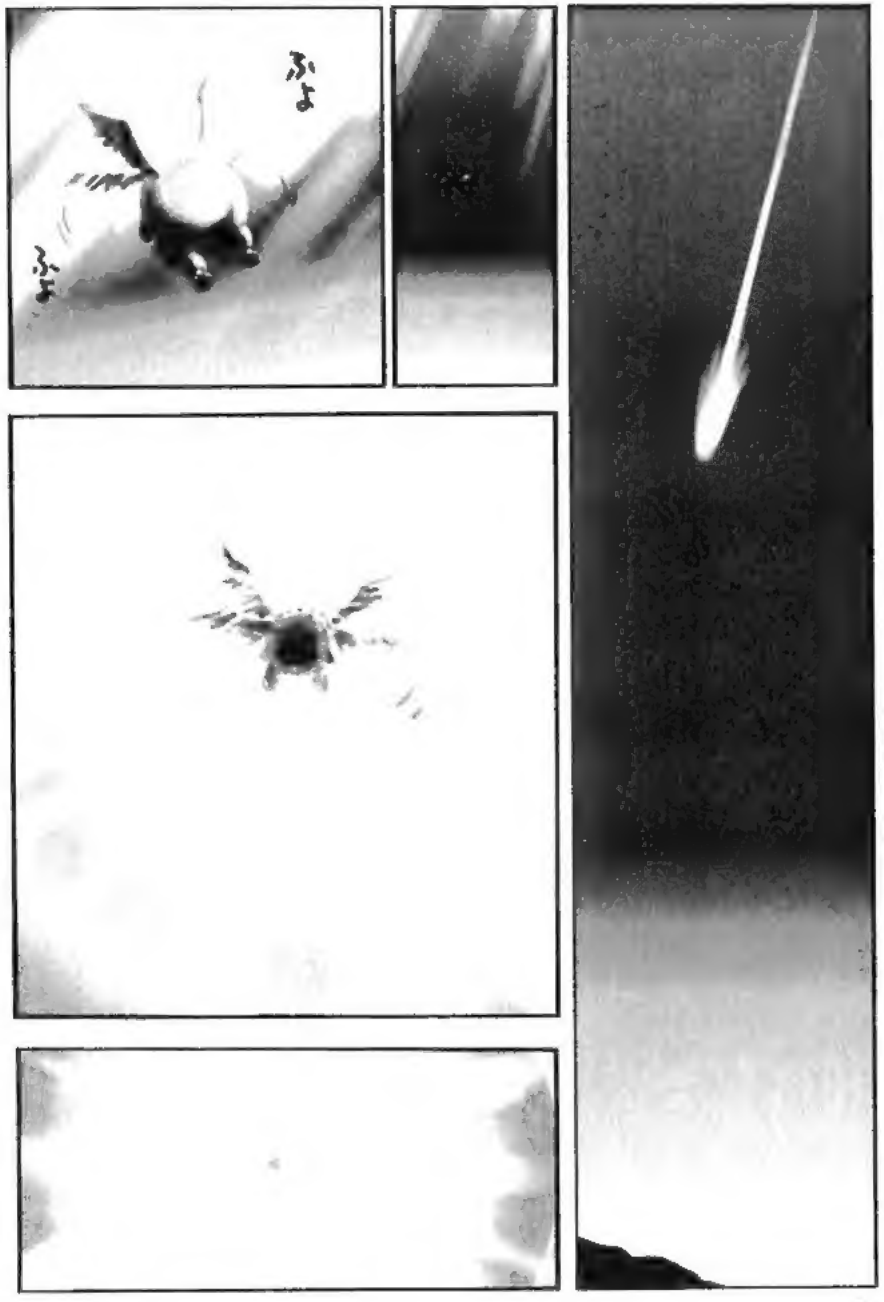

Wherein Qwan Begins His Journey with the Lowlife Chikei


ふよ
ふよ

OH, WELL-- I CAN PROBABLY MAKE A TON SELLING IT!
JUDGING FROM ITS WINGS...I GUESS IT'S SOME KIND OF BIRD.
RUSTLE
??
WHAT? YOU WANT SOME FOOD?
THE THING IN THAT BOX...
IT'S MINE!
...GIVE IT BACK!

I MEAN, WHY SHOULD THOSE IN HEAVEN FEAST ON OFFERINGS WHILE THE POOR STARVE?
IS EVERYONE NOT CREATED EQUAL?
WHEN YOU'RE POOR...YOU GOTTA TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET!
WHAT AN ANNOYING BUG...
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS THING?!

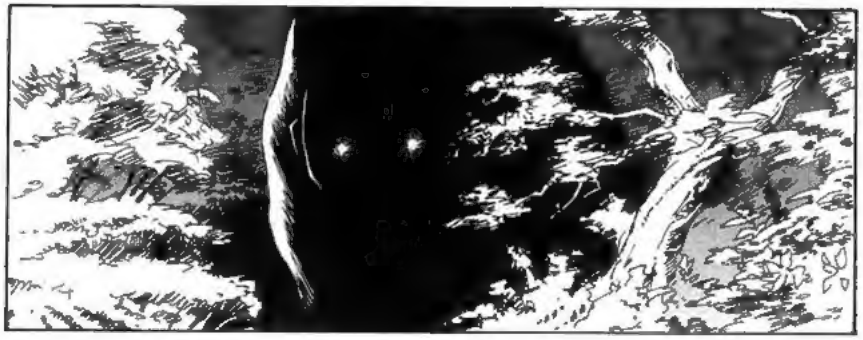
WHAAA?!
He ate that?!
UGH!
W-WELL... I CAUGHT IT, SO IT'S MINE!

WELL, TECHNICALLY IT'S AN OFFERING-- BUT FOOD IS FOOD!
LOOK, I'LL GIVE YOU SOME FOOD. JUST GO AWAY!
OH, REALLY?
PROVE IT!
?!
?
I'LL TRADE YOU THIS FOR IT.

SORRY, KID... BUT I'M A REALIST.
I DON'T BELIEVE IN DEMONS.

WHAT'S WITH THIS KID...?

WHAT WOULD I NEED ONE OF THOSE FOR?! THAT WOULDN'T DO ME ANY GOOD!
YOU DON'T HAVE AN AMULET TO PROTECT YOURSELF, DO YOU? YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF GUTS.

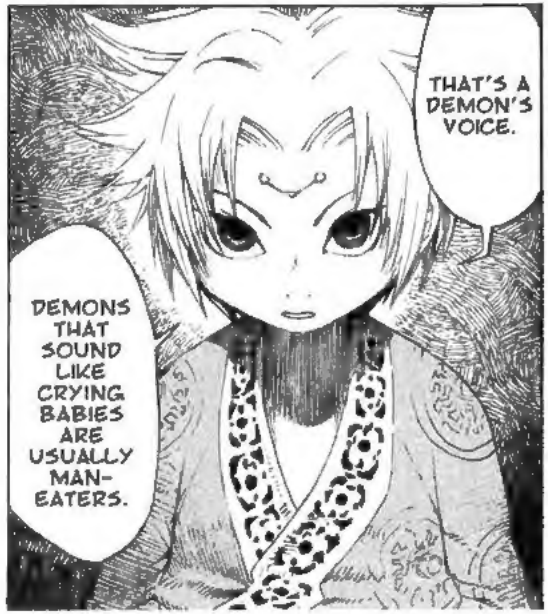


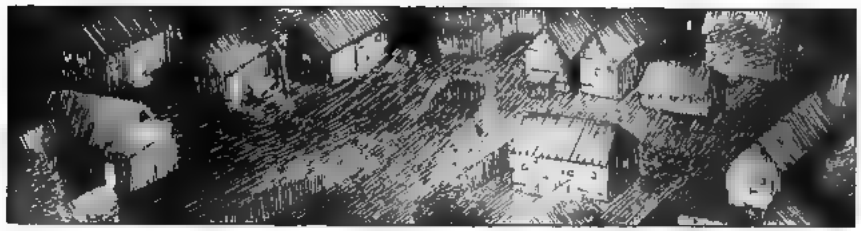
WAAAHHH!
WAAAHHH!
WAAAHHH!

IF YOU TRY TO TAKE IT, I'LL KILL YOU.
HEY, KID! QUIT FOLLOWIN' ME AROUND!

YOU'D BETTER NOT FOLLOW IT.

WAAAHHH!
WAAAHHH!
?
IS THAT... A BABY CRYING?


THAT'S A DEMON'S VOICE.
DEMONS THAT SOUND LIKE CRYING BABIES ARE USUALLY MAN-EATERS.



WELL, I SELL MEDICINE.. SO I GET BY.
YOU'VE SURE COME A LONG WAY FROM HOME!
THAT KIND OF TRAVEL MUST BE TOUGH NOWA-DAYS

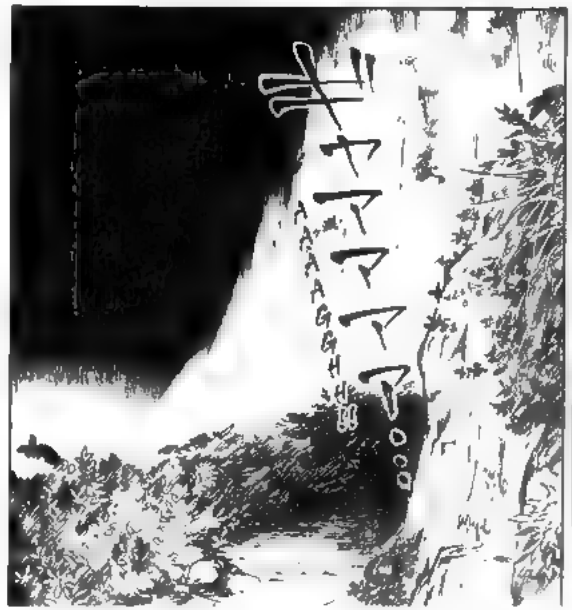
I HEAR THE EMPEROR HIMSELF HAS BECOME NOTHING MORE THAN A PUPPET OF THE EUNUCHS
EVER SINCE THIS EMPEROR TOOK THE THRONE, EVERY-THING'S BEEN FALLING APART.
EARTH-QUAKES, FAMINE... THE FLOODING OF THE YELLOW RIVER...

HE'S PRETTY CRAZY FOR A TAOIST, ISN'T HE?
LAST YEAR, I MET SOME OF THE EMPEROR'S MESSENGERS ON A RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE.

OOOOOHHH DRANK .. TOO MUCH.. AGAIN...

?
GURGLE
HIC

WAAAAHHH


AAAAAGGHHH

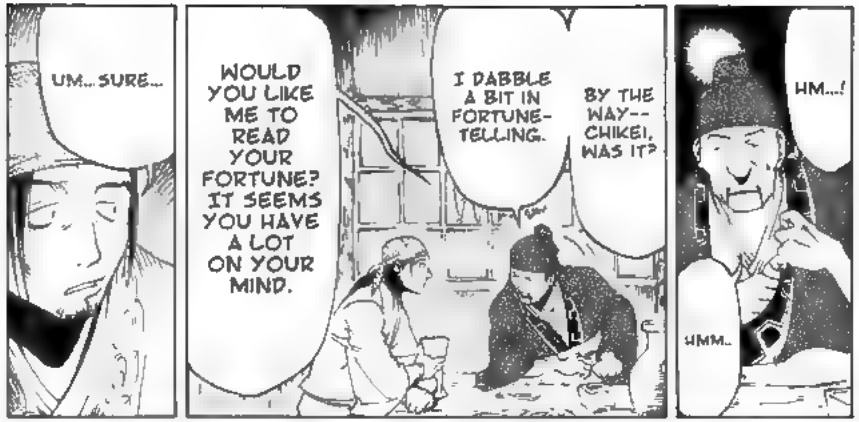
..OH! THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL.
...THESE STRAWS..
HMM... HMMMM...

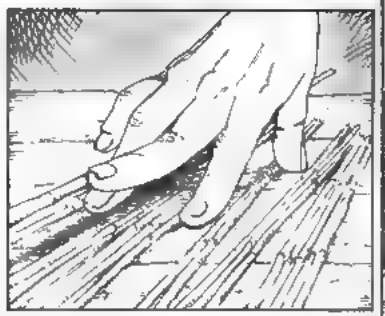
BEWARE
AN UNEXPECTED MEETING WILL BEAR MUCH MISFOR-TUNE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HUH? SOUNDS LIKE SOME-THING'S GOING ON OUTSIDE.

AH! WAIT!

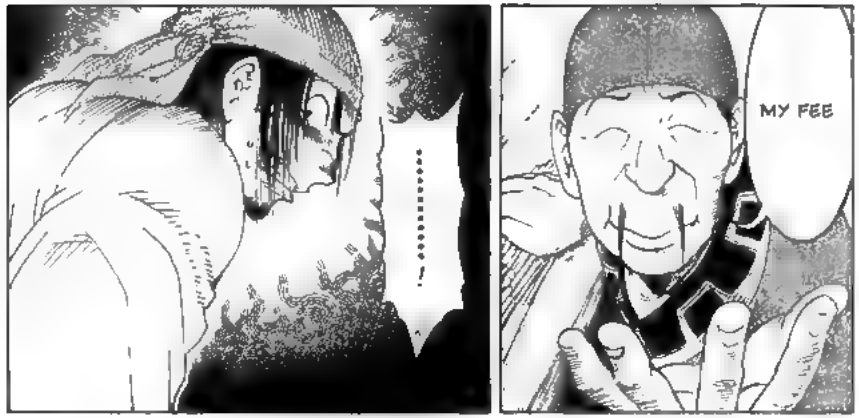
MISFOR-TUNE, EH?
WELL, A CERTAIN KID IMMEDIATELY COMES TO MIND..


UM... SURE...
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO READ YOUR FORTUNE? IT SEEMS YOU HAVE A LOT ON YOUR MIND.
I DABBLE A BIT IN FORTUNE-TELLING.
BY THE WAY-- CHIKEI, WAS IT?
HM...!
HMM..



VERY WELL!

CATCH HIM!!
THERE HE IS! THAT'S HIM!
DAMN THAT SCHEMING OLD MAN!!
YEOWWCH!! WHAT THE HELL--?!
THANKS TO YOU, SOMEONE DIED!
YOU ATE THE OFFER-INGS, DIDN'T YOU?
WHERE'S YOUR PROOF?!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!


MY FEE

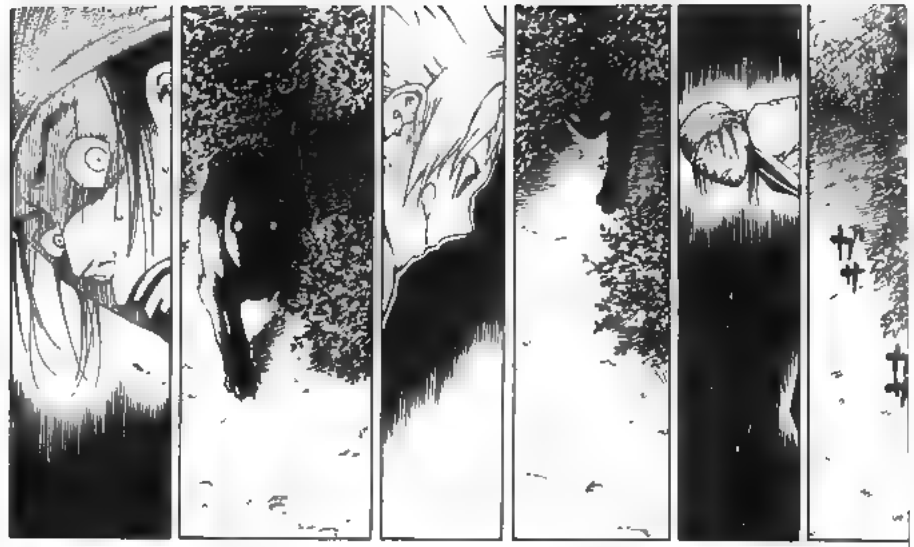
THEY SAY THAT'S THE CHOU FROM THE WEST.
SOMEONE HAS ANGERED THE MOUNTAIN GODS.
HORRIBLE...
UGH-- DISGUSTING!

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MOUNTAIN GODS!!
PFFT... OUTSIDER. YOU HAD THIS COMING.
DAMMIT! LEMME DOWN FROM HERE!!
DAMN... ALL THIS JUST BECAUSE OF A COUPLE MEASLY OFFER-INGS!
FOOLS! LEMME DOWN!! LEMME DOWN!!!

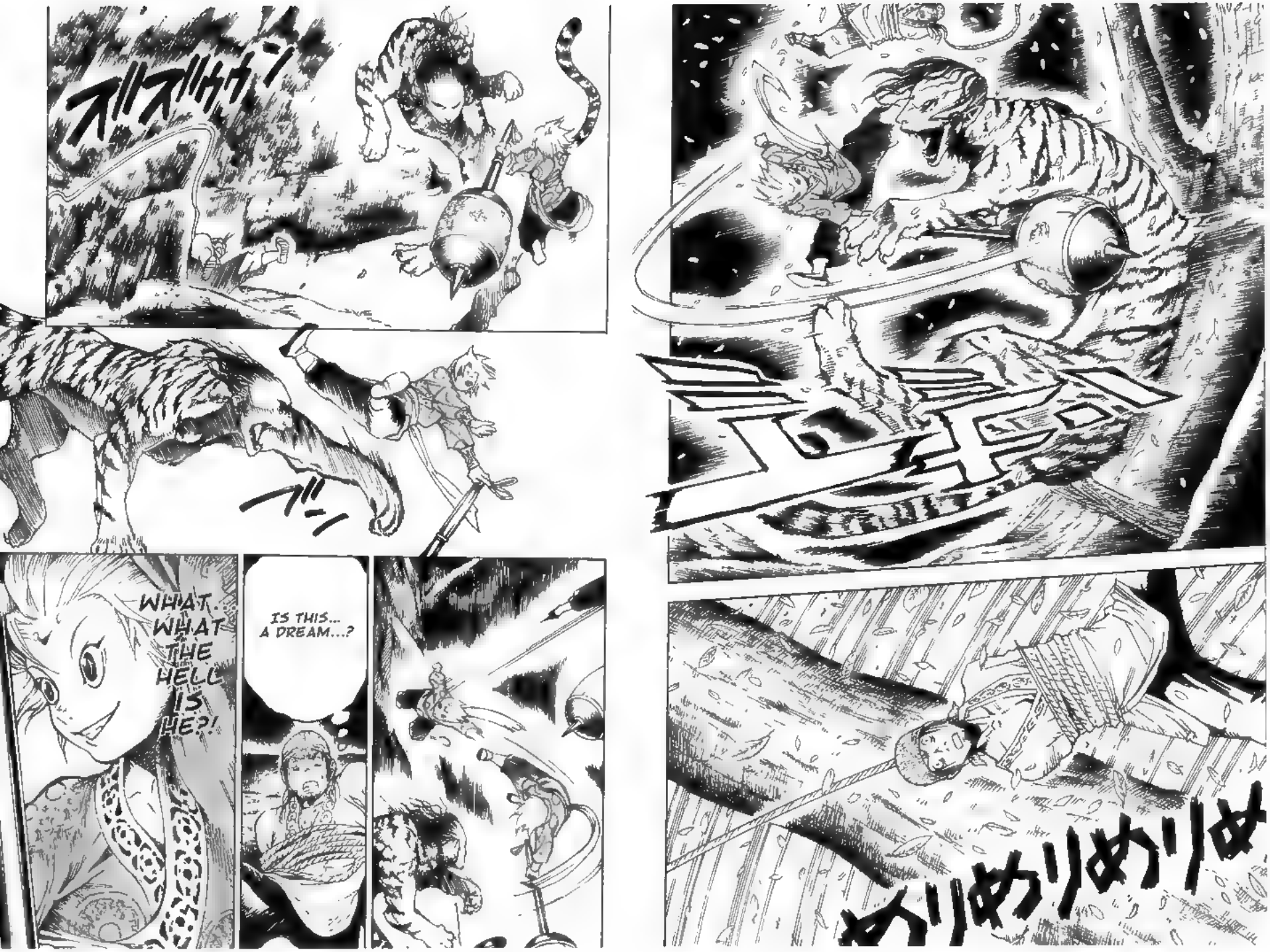
DO YOU KNOW HIM?
I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS KID AROUND HERE.
BEATS ME.
THAT'S HIM.
I SAW. HE GRABBED THE OFFERINGS AND ATE THEM.
WE MUST APPEASE THE MOUNTAIN GODS!
WELL, STRING HIM UP!

ホギャアアア...
Waaaahhh!
Gahhh!
FINE! FINE! I'LL GIVE IT BACK!
JUST HELP ME-- PLEASE!!
The crying stopped
AH-- IT'S HERE!
Aaaa
Ha ha ha!
HELP YOU? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

DEMONS THAT SOUND LIKE CRYING BABIES ARE USUALLY MAN-EATERS.
WAAAAHH!
AAAHH
WELL?! HELP ME DOWN ALREADY!
HURRY!
THEN YOU'LL GIVE IT BACK?
I COULD HAVE TAKEN IT FROM YOU ALREADY. YOU KNOW.
Heh heh...
SO? HOW YA FEELING?
ARRGHH-- YOU!



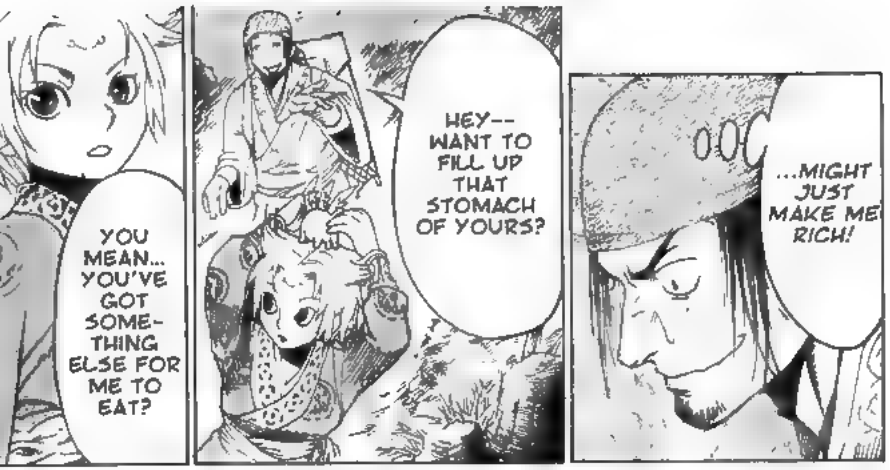
I-I'LL GIVE IT BACK! I WILL!!
ギャあああ
LOOKS PRETTY HUNGRY, TOO.
THAT'S A BAFUKU-- A DEMON WITH A HUMAN'S HEAD AND A TIGER'S BODY.
JUST SAVE ME-- I BEG YOU!!!
ヤあああ


WHAT. WHAT THE HELL IS HE?!
IS THIS... A DREAM...?

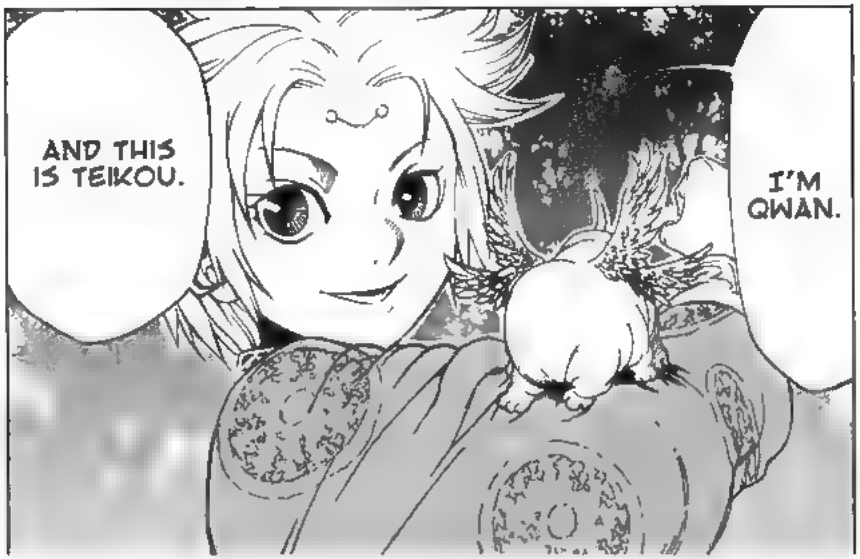
ゴアァ!!
GOTCHA!

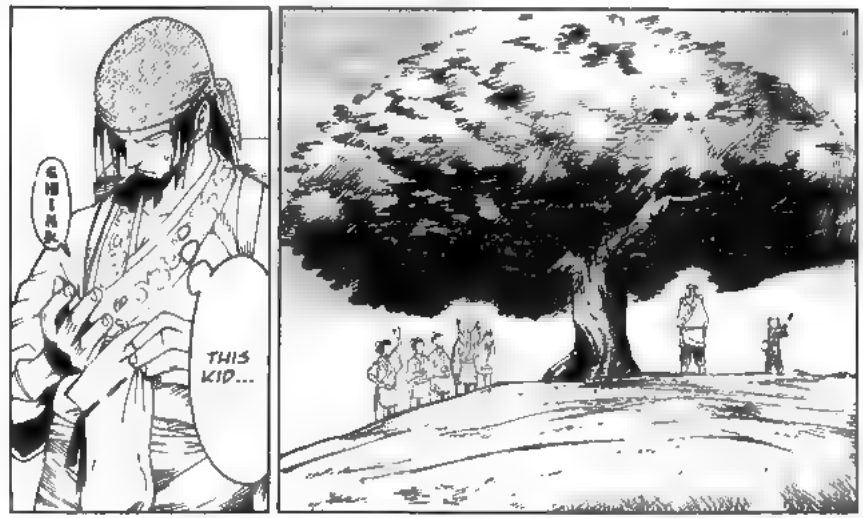
ギャアアア!!
ぶるるん
ドド!!
ストッ
!

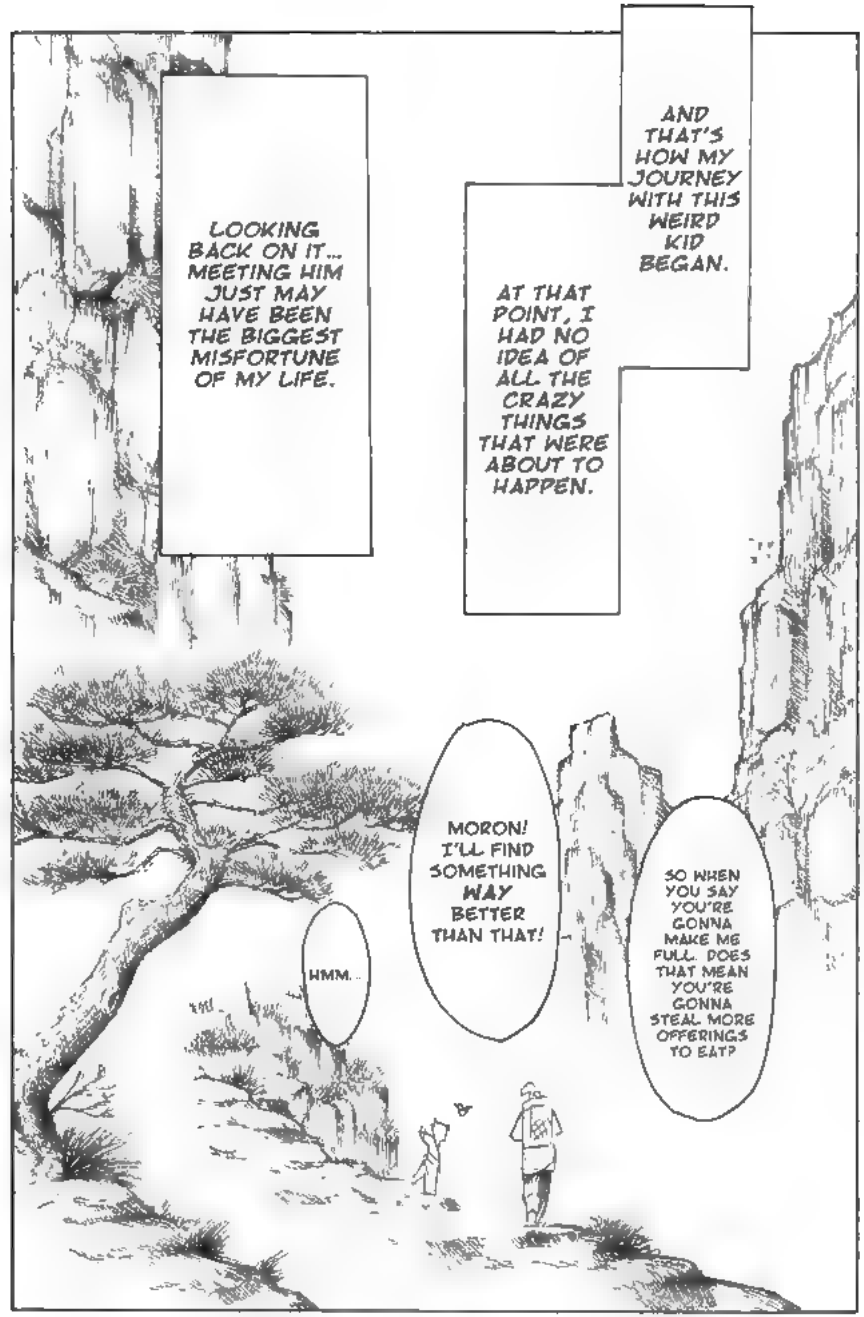
ごろん
I HUMBLY ACCEPT THIS MEAL.


YOU MEAN... YOU'VE GOT SOME-THING ELSE FOR ME TO EAT?
HEY-- WANT TO FILL UP THAT STOMACH OF YOURS?
...MIGHT JUST MAKE ME RICH!

I'M CHIKEI. WHAT'S YOUR HANDLE?
HE'S A KID AT HEART, AT LEAST...
REALLY?! I ACCEPT!
SURE ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS WORK WITH ME A LITTLE.

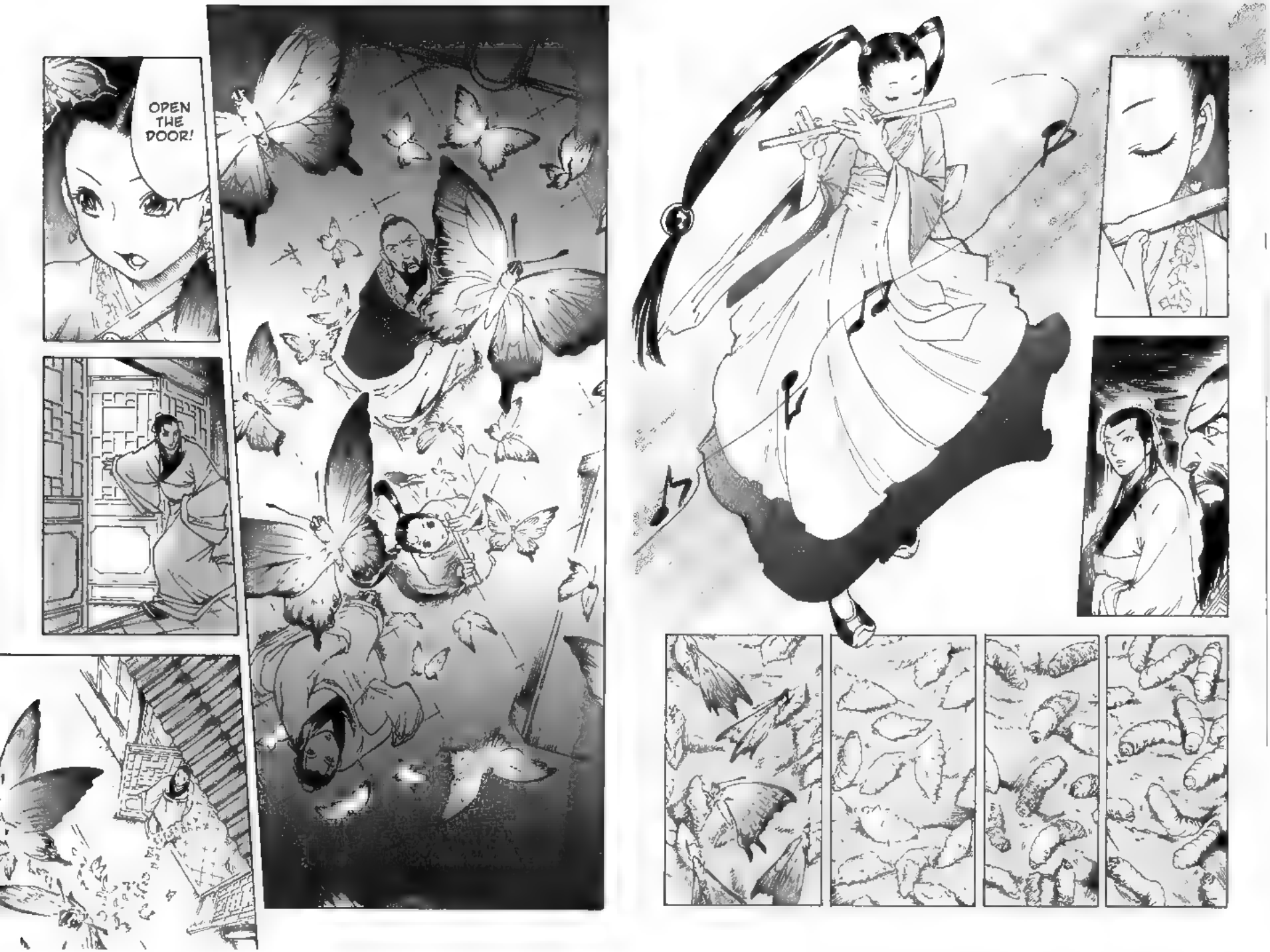

AND THIS IS TEIKOU.
I'M QWAN.

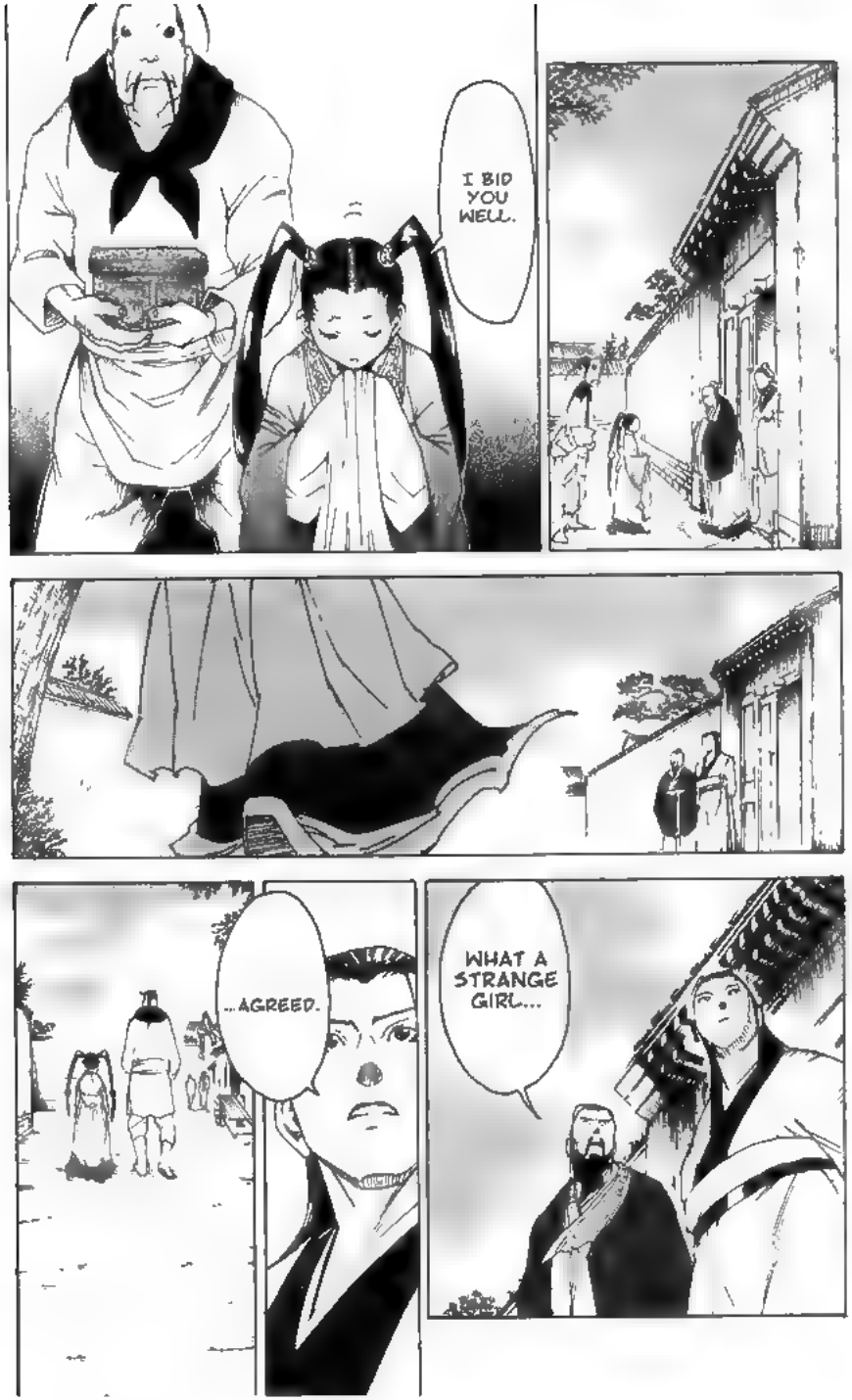

CHINK
THIS KID...


LOOKING BACK ON IT... MEETING HIM JUST MAY HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST MISFORTUNE OF MY LIFE.
AT THAT POINT, I HAD NO IDEA OF ALL THE CRAZY THINGS THAT WERE ABOUT TO HAPPEN.
AND THAT'S HOW MY JOURNEY WITH THIS WEIRD KID BEGAN.
HMM...
MORON! I'LL FIND SOMETHING WAY BETTER THAN THAT!
SO WHEN YOU SAY YOU'RE GONNA MAKE ME FULL. DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE GONNA STEAL MORE OFFERINGS TO EAT?

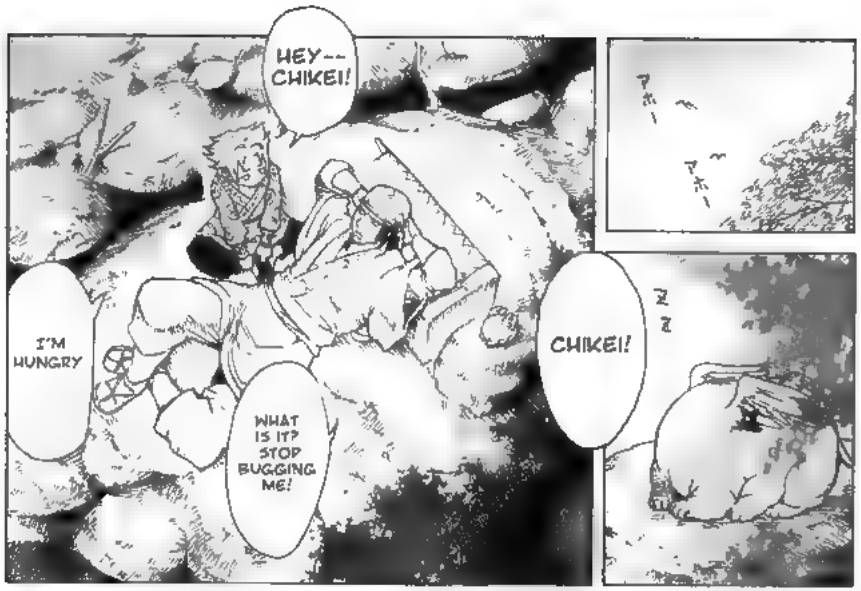
GRAND MARSHALL, SIR--CAN YOU THINK OF ANY REASON SOMEONE MIGHT HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST YOU?
IN THE INCIDENT TO WHICH YOU REFER, WOODEN DOLLS WERE USED.
AND THESE ARE NOT LIMITED TO BUGS-- DOGS, PIGS AND OTHER BEASTS, AS WELL AS BIRDS AND PLANTS, HAVE ALSO BEEN USED FOR THIS TYPE OF CURSE
YES. IT IS A CURSE AGAINST ANOTHER'S LIFE
BUT-- BUG SORCERY IS WHAT HAPPENED AT THE PALACE YEARS AGO--!
LONG AGO...
IN THE FORMER HAN ERA, PEOPLE BELIEVED THEY COULD CURSE SOMEONE BY PLANTING A WOODEN DOLL IN THE GROUND AND CHANTING A SPELL.
THE EMPEROR AT THE TIME FELL ILL AND, BELIEVING HIS ILLNESS WAS DUE TO SUCH SORCERY, EXECUTED MANY OF HIS SUBJECTS-- PEASANTS AND NOBLES ALIKE. THIS BECAME KNOWN AS THE "BUG SORCERY INCIDENT."
I DO NOT KNOW... BUT THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE.
THE SPELL HAS ALREADY FILLED THIS CHAMBER
THE GRAND MARSHALL IS A PHILANTHROPIST, AND VERY WELL RESPECTED WHY WOULD ANYONE BEGRUDGE HIM?
STOP

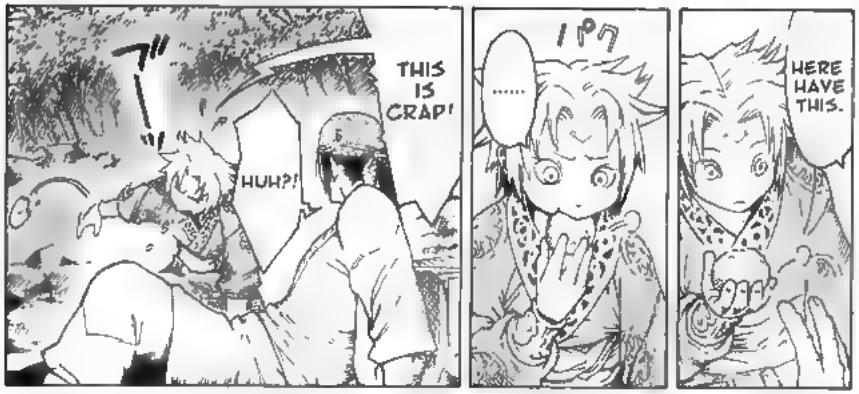
THERE. YOU SEE?
THINGS LIKE THIS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING FOR A MONTH NOW.
MAGGOTS IN RICE THAT HAS JUST BEEN COOKED...
...POISONOUS BUGS IN THE BEDCHAMBERS.
.....
THIS IS BUG SORCERY.
THAT IS WHY WE BROUGHT YOU HERE-- ON LORD JOU KAI'S RECOMMENDATION.
-TA WEI CHIN BAN- (NICKNAME CHUUKYO)
TAIWEI: A GRAND MARSHAL OF THE MILITARY IN ANCIENT CHINA
ADVISOR TO THE EMPEROR
HAVE YOU ANY THOUGHTS AS TO THE CAUSE, LADY DAKI?
-JOU KA (NICKNAME KUKO)- THE CAPITAL'S SCHOLAR OF THE HEAVENS

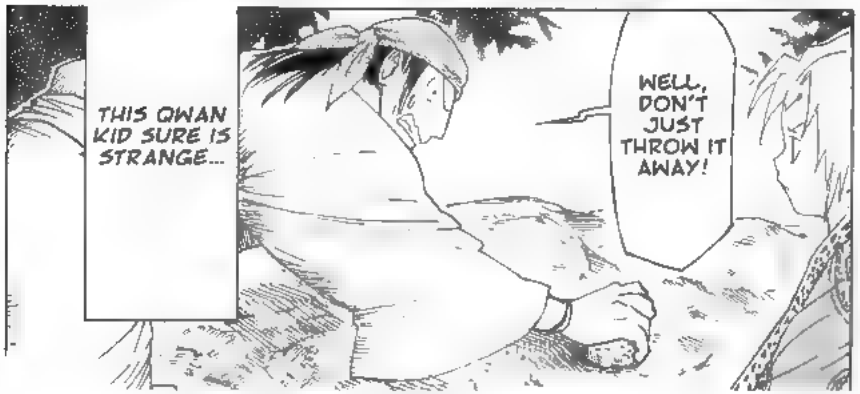

OPEN THE DOOR!


I BID YOU WELL.
...AGREED.
WHAT A STRANGE GIRL...

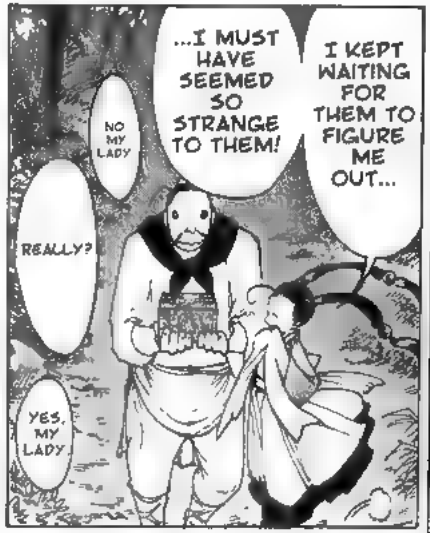
THEN THAT IS WHERE THE ONE WHO CAST THE CURSE IS NOW
THE SPELL'S RETURN MAY CAUSE HIM GREAT PAIN.
HE MAY EVEN DIE.
THE CURSE HAS BEEN TURNED UPON THE ONE WHO CAST IT.
THEY FLEW NORTH-WEST..
TOWARD LUOYANG.
SO...IT IS THE TEN EUNUCHS AFTER ALL?


HEY--
CHIKEI!
I'M HUNGRY
WHAT IS IT? STOP BUGGING ME!
CHIKEI!
Z Z


THIS IS CRAP!
HUH?!
.....
HERE HAVE THIS.


THIS QWAN KID SURE IS STRANGE...
WELL, DON'T JUST THROW IT AWAY!

NO ONE, MY LADY
KAKOKUSEI- NO ONE'S AROUND, CORRECT?
VERY GOOD...
スウ...


NO MY LADY
...I MUST HAVE SEEMED SO STRANGE TO THEM!
I KEPT WAITING FOR THEM TO FIGURE ME OUT...
REALLY?
YES, MY LADY

YES MY LADY
GOOD. I'M GLAD. ♡

AHHHH-- THAT WAS SO TENSE!!

DEMONS
HE EATS...
FOR STARTERS, HE DOESN'T EAT FOOD
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU'D FILL ME UP?
NOW THAT MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL
NOT TO MENTION THAT TEIKOU THING THAT FOLLOWS HIM AROUND
AND THEN THERE'S THAT WEIRD WEAPON HE HAS.
HE HAS STRENGTH NO KID IN THE WORLD SHOULD POSSESS.
BECAUSE IF I ATE TEIKOU, I'D BE SWALLOWED UP!
I CAN'T EAT TEIKOU!
HEY-- WHY NOT EAT HIM?
WHY NOT?
STILL... IT'S LOOKING PRETTY TASTY RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

HEY! TEIKOU!
WAIT! QWAN!
H...
...HEY!
HUH? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
AH!
TEE HEE HEE THAT WAS A BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE, ALL OF YOU!
EVEN THE GRAND MARSHAL BOUGHT IT!
EH?

THAT GIRL
!
WHAT?! SHE LOOKS LIKE A NORMAL KID TO ME!
...THE SCENT OF A DEMON IS ALL OVER HER!
AH--! HEY!!

TEE HEE HEE...
...YOU ARE CUTE, THOUGH!
YOU... YOU'RE NOT A BUG.

ドゴ
JUST HOLD STILL ...
...WHILE I EAT YOU!!
I HUMBLY...

KYAAAAA?!
WHO ARE YOU?
H-HUH?!

EH?
AND WITH THAT... TIME TO HEAD H--
HE DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST KAIKOKUSEI'S STRENGTH!
A HA HA! ♡

GET RID OF HIM, KAIKOKUSEI!
YES, MY LADY
EH?

WH... WHY, YOU...
...I WON'T FORGIVE YOU!

ドロ
ミトボ

!!
CHIEHHH!!

BZZZ
KONNA
YEOWWWW!!
UWAH!
YOU...!
パリ
AHH'S
STOP!!
!

QWAN.
THAT'S MY NAME

AHH.. AHH.. AHH..

...I HUMBLY ACCEPT THIS MEAL.
AND AS I WAS SAY-ING..

KYA?!
ベチャ

JUST WHAT ARE YOU?!
YOU'RE NOT VERY STRONG, ARE YOU?

チュウウ〜

スウウウ…
HM?
?
WHY ISN'T HE EATING HER ALREADY?
…ﾊﾅﾌﾞﾁ
ｸﾞｲｯ
!
??
?

WHAT ARE YOU?

I MIGHT ASK YOU THE SAME!!

I CAN'T EAT HER?!

WHAT'S THAT HORNY KID DOING?
……

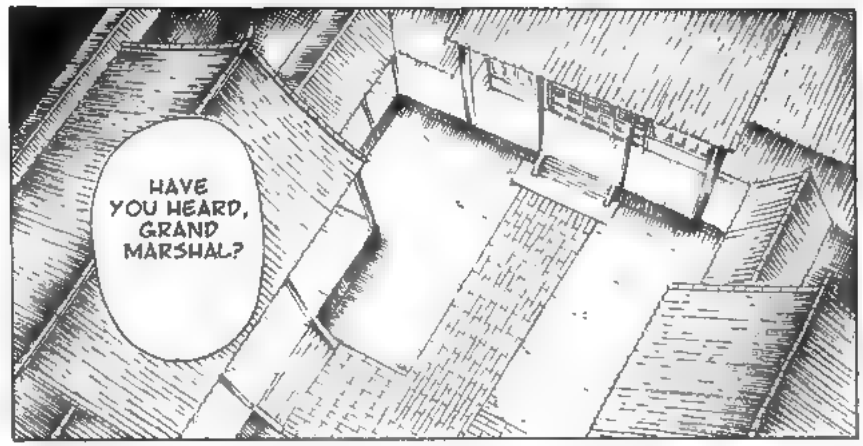
WHO KNOWS.
BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT
WHY DIDN'T YOU EAT HER? SHE LOOKED PRETTY TASTY
WHY NOT?
I COULDN'T
MIND IF I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
.....
HM?
I'M FULL ANYWAY.

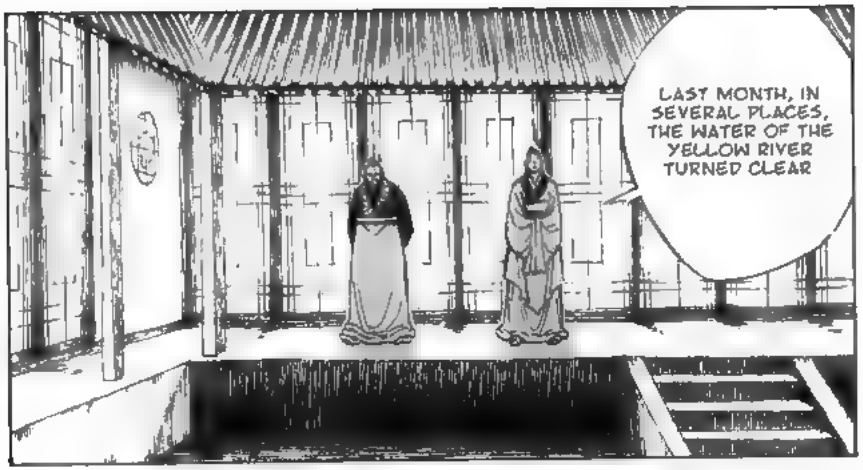
サアアア
OH-- TEIKOU!
IS IT OVER, QWAN?
.....

NOT THAT I'M THE TYPE WHO BELIEVES IN GODS OR ANYTHING
HUH?! YOU SAYING YOU'RE A GOD OR SOMETHING?
GOING? WHERE?
.....
AH, WELL LET'S GET GOING
WHATEVER YOU CALL IT, THE WEATHER'S NICE.
THE RIVER IS SUPPOSED TO BE A CLEAR STREAM RIGHT NOW...OR SOMETHING.
HENAN, OF COURSE.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS? WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
WHAT ARE YOU? A DEMON? AN IMMORTAL?
HEAVEN.

-HENAN-


HAVE YOU HEARD, GRAND MARSHAL?


LAST MONTH, IN SEVERAL PLACES, THE WATER OF THE YELLOW RIVER TURNED CLEAR

THE YELLOW RIVER TURNING CLEAR AT A TIME IT IS MEANT TO BE MUDDY COULD ONLY OCCUR IF YIN SHIFTED TO YANG.
CLEAR IS YANG MUDDY IS YIN

I HEARD SOMETHING SIMILAR HAPPENED THIS MONTH LAST YEAR.

THE AGED YIN IS ON EDGE.
IT IS LOOKING TO CHANGE TO A NEW YANG.

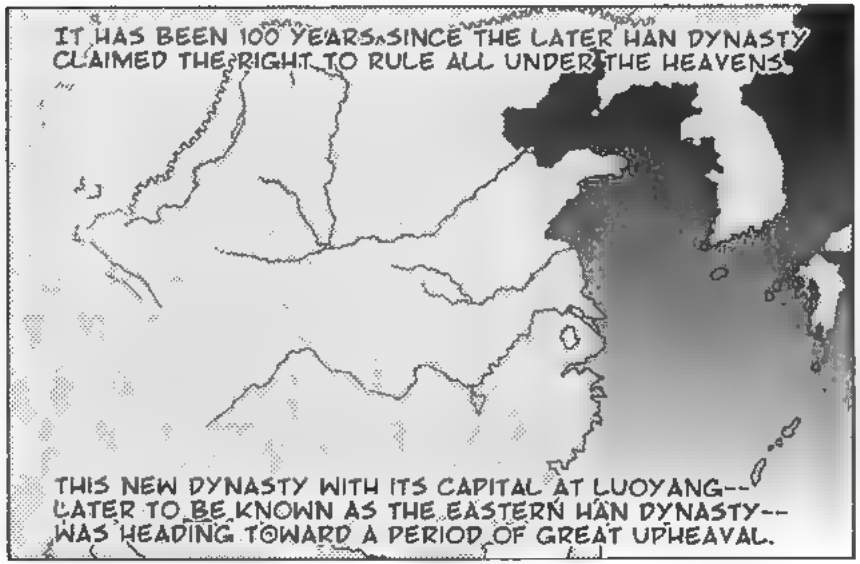
WE CAN SEE THE SAME THING BY OBSERVING THE MOVEMENT OF THE STARS.

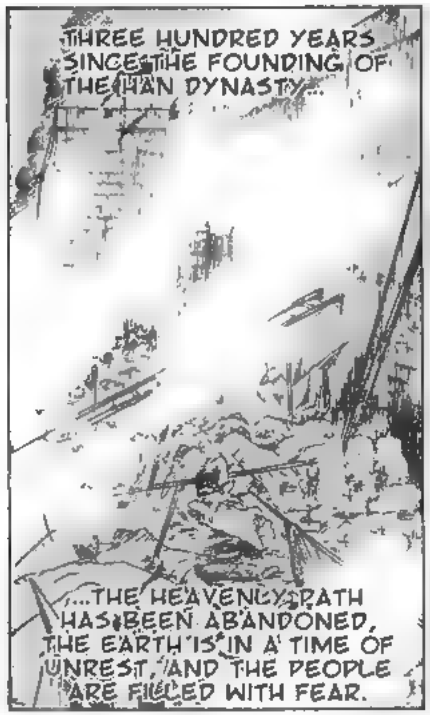
BUT WITH THE DYNASTY ALREADY ON A SLOPE TOWARDS ITS DOWN-FALL..
THAT IS ENOUGH, JOU KAI!
AS THE EMPEROR ENJOYS A BLISSFUL LIFE, THERE ARE THOSE WITHOUT SHAME RUNNING THE GOVERN-MENT
WE DO NOT KNOW IF THIS WILL BE IN ONE YEAR OR TEN...
I REALIZE YOU ARE TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, GRAND MARSHAL.
AND WITH THE STATE OF THE COURT AT THE MOMENT, IT IS CONCEIVABLE, DO YOU NOT AGREE?
I SHALL EXCUSE MYSELF
FORGIVE ME.
I HAVE SAID TOO MUCH

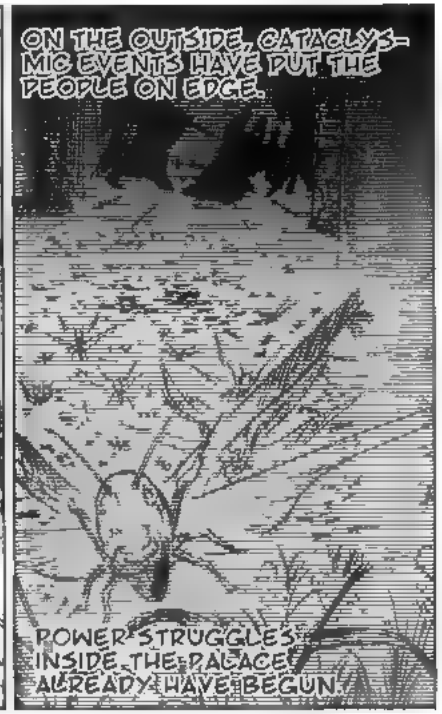
"THE YELLOW RIVER FLOWS ONE FOOT EVERY THOUSAND YEARS..."
".. THE FOOT OF THE EMPEROR HIM-SELF."
YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE SAYING, YES?
AND WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS, MASTER JOU KAI?
THE SUBJECTS-- THE YIN-- ARE LEADING UP TO AN ATTEMPT TO DISPLACE THE EMPEROR'S YANG.
THESE EVENTS HERALD A CHANGE.
.....
.AND A NEW DYNASTY WILL STAND?
IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?
THE HAN DYNASTY WILL FALL..

Wherein Qwan Meets the Mysterious Yuushi, and Chikei's Life is Threatened

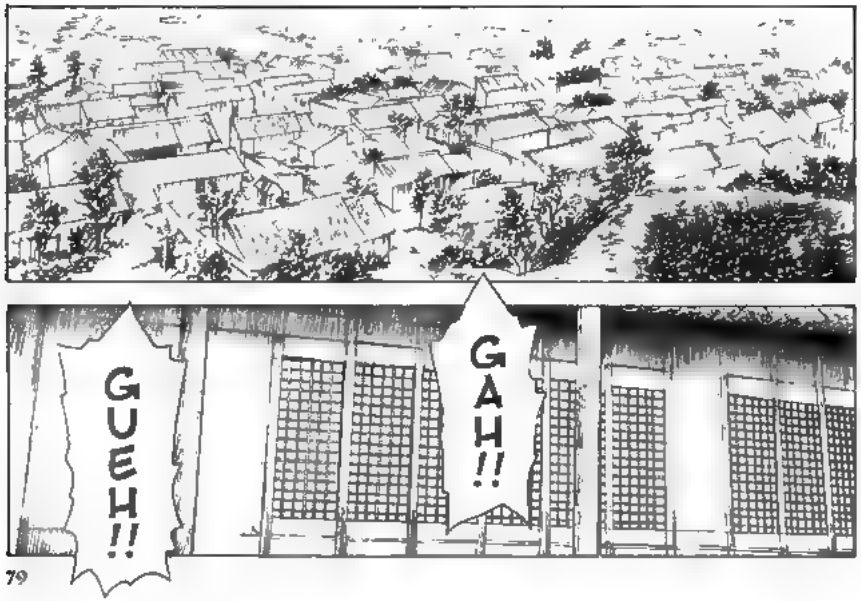
THE STARS HAD PROPHESIED THAT THE LONG RULE OF HAN UNDER THE HEAVENS WOULD SOON BE AT AN END. BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH WOULD SOON BE SHIFTING TO A TIME OF TURMOIL.
IT IS THE END OF THE LATER HAN DYNASTY, WITH A NEW PERIOD OF UPHEAVAL ALREADY IN SIGHT. QWAN AND DAI HAVE MET, AND THEIR DESTINIES SHALL SOON INTERTWINE.


IT HAS BEEN 100 YEARS SINCE THE LATER HAN DYNASTY CLAIMED THE RIGHT TO RULE ALL UNDER THE HEAVENS.
THIS NEW DYNASTY WITH ITS CAPITAL AT LUOYANG--LATER TO BE KNOWN AS THE EASTERN HAN DYNASTY--WAS HEADING TOWARD A PERIOD OF GREAT UPHEAVAL.


THREE HUNDRED YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE HAN DYNASTY...
...THE HEAVENLY PATH HAS BEEN ABANDONED, THE EARTH IS IN A TIME OF UNREST, AND THE PEOPLE ARE FILLED WITH FEAR.


ON THE OUTSIDE, CATACLYSMIC EVENTS HAVE PUT THE PEOPLE ON EDGE.
POWER STRUGGLES INSIDE THE PALACE ALREADY HAVE BEGUN.

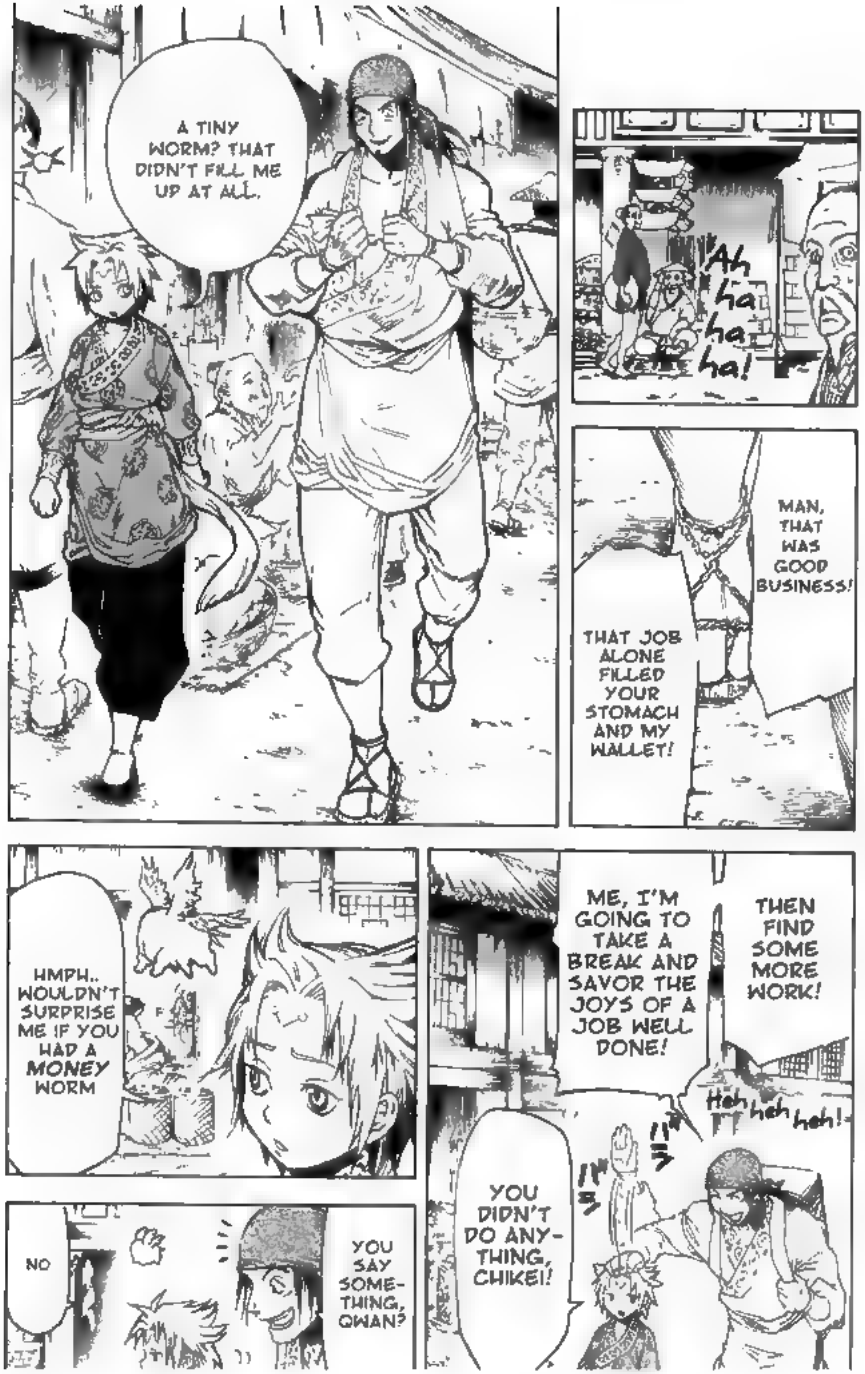
AND DURING THIS VERY ERA - WHERE EVERYTHING STANDS TO CHANGE...


GUEH!!
GAH!!

ONE OF THOSE... WAS IN MY HUSBAND?!
THERE ARE ALSO WORMS THAT MAKE YOU EAT NONSTOP... AND WORMS THAT MAKE WOMEN CHEAT ON THEIR HUSBANDS.
...BUT IN GENERAL, THEY JUST BRING OUT WHATEVER "DESIRE" YOU POSSESS DEEP DOWN.
ANYWAY-- JUST BE CAREFUL IN THE FUTURE!
UHH... YES...!

I GOT IT!
NGAH!! GHH GHH...
HEY, DON'T MOVE!
AN AL-COHOL WORM.
IT'S A TYPE OF STOMACH WORM.
IF YOU GET ONE OF THESE, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP DRINKING UNTIL YOU DIE!
SEE? THIS IS WHAT WAS CAUSING IT

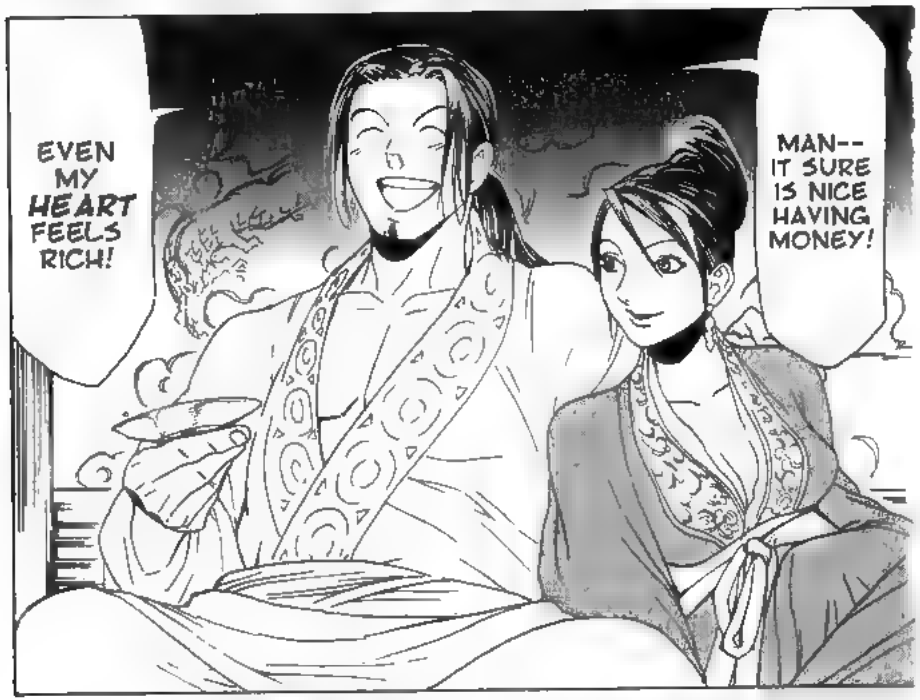
WE'VE BEEN ROUGHING IT FOR SO LONG...
...TONIGHT, LET'S PARTY!
WOO! HOO!
...I DIDN'T EXPECT THIS TO BE EASY...
..BUT STILL... I HAVEN'T MADE IT VERY FAR.
I NEED TO EAT MORE.


A TINY WORM? THAT DIDN'T FILL ME UP AT ALL.
Ah ha ha ha!
MAN, THAT WAS GOOD BUSINESS!
THAT JOB ALONE FILLED YOUR STOMACH AND MY WALLET!
HMPH.. WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF YOU HAD A MONEY WORM
ME, I'M GOING TO TAKE A BREAK AND SAVOR THE JOYS OF A JOB WELL DONE!
THEN FIND SOME MORE WORK!
Heh heh heh!
NO
YOU SAY SOMETHING, QWAN?
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, CHIKE!!

Y-YES, LORD YUUSHI.
IT SOUNDS LIKE THE CHIN BAN INCIDENT WENT WELL.
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE HIS MIND IN THE FUTURE
HMM... OH WELL.
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TELL HIM KAIKOKUSEI GOT EATEN.
.....
カアアア
MUCH LESS...

I HAVE NOT SEEN HIM FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS...
WHERE IS KAI-KOKU-SEI?
DAKI.
K-KAI-KOKUSEI... HAS...HAD A BIT OF... INDIGESTION LATELY!
ギクリ
EH?!
AH!
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF A BUG WITH INDIGESTION BEFORE.
ギロリ
INDIGES-TION?!
...I-I'LL ASK HIM LATER.
.....
WELL, HE MUST HAVE EATEN SOMETHING REALLY BIZARRE, OR .
R-R-REALLY ?!
HUH?!

HA-HA-HA-HA!


EVEN MY HEART FEELS RICH!
MAN-- IT SURE IS NICE HAVING MONEY!

PSST-- CHIKE!!
うはは
OH, REALLY ?!
WHAT A COINCI-DENCE! I LOVE PEOPLE WITH MONEY, TOO. ♡

HM.

THAT MAN...
...HE WILL DO.

N-NO... IT'S NOT!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOUR FACE IS RED
AH-- YES, SIR!!
DAKI-- LET US GO!

DON'T GO TOO FAR!
I'LL BE WAITING OUT-SIDE!!
AWW, HE WAS BLUSHING! HOW CUTE!
THAT YOUR SON?
OF COURSE NOT
HE DIDN'T HEAR ME.
A A R...
THEN AGAIN, I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIM MY-SELF
'COURSE HE IS. HOW ELSE WOULD I HAVE THE MONEY TO EAT?
HMMM... SO YOU'RE TELLING ME A KID LIKE THAT IS A DEMON FIGHTER?

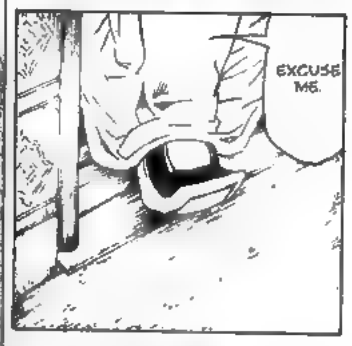
AHHH-- JUST DARLING!!
BUT WHY? MOMMY LOVES YOU, TOO! YOU'RE SO CUTE!
GAH-- GET OFF ME! WOMEN SMELL FUNNY!
I WANNA GO HOME.
JUST HANG IN THERE A LITTLE LONGER, OKAY?
PFT.
OH, QWAN-CHAN... SAY AHHHH!
SEE? ♡
AHH. ♡
AH-- HEY!
SO THIS THING'S NAME IS.. TEIKOU?

WELL, HE'S PAYIN'?
TONIGHT WILL BE MY TREAT, OF COURSE.
ALL RIGHT! IF IT'S WORK-RELATED, I'M LISTENING!
HOW ABOUT IT?

I SEE...A BOY WHO EATS DEMONS?
BUT DEMONS AREN'T SOMETHING ONE ENCOUNTERS OFTEN... ARE THEY?
HIS PERSONALITY'S A LITTLE OUT THERE, BUT HE'S ONE HANDY KID
YUP

I HEAR YOU'RE A DEMON EXTERMINATOR.
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU AND I COULD HAVE A LITTLE CHAT.

HUH? WHAT'S THE COMMOTION?
キャアキャア

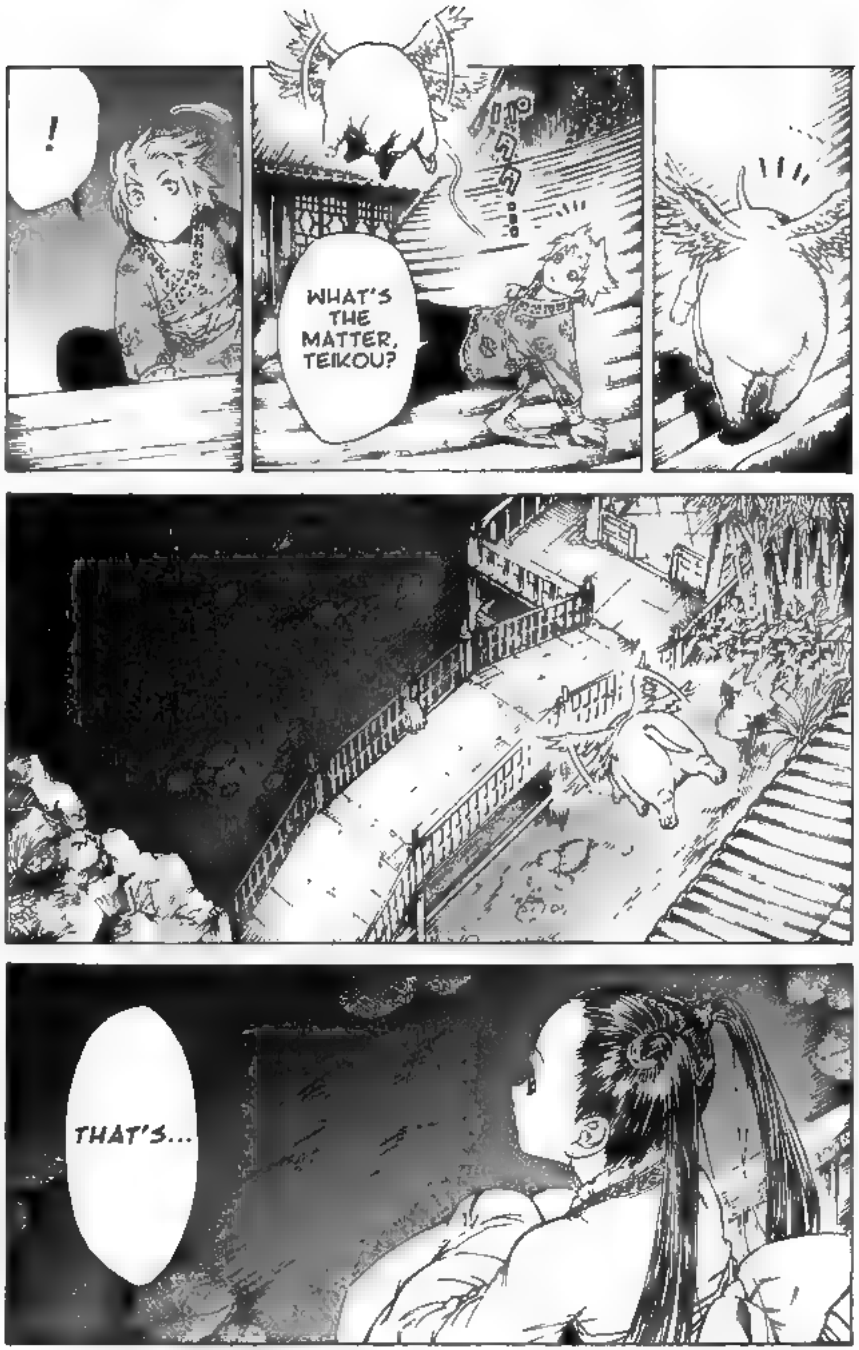

EXCUSE ME.

I DIDN'T ASK FOR ANY GUYS
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

LORD YUUSHI !!

WHAT THE HELL DOES CHIKEI FIND FUN ABOUT THAT?
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO JUST SIT AROUND.

THREE DAYS AGO, WE RAN INTO THIS GIRL WHO COULD CONTROL BUGS... AND A GRASSHOPPER DEMON!
YOU'D BE SURPRISED
AND THIS BOY..HE ATE THEM?
!
HAVE YOU TOLD ANY-ONE ABOUT THIS?
I SEE SO THAT'S WHAT HAP-PENED
OH... NO REA-SON.
NO? WHY?
WELL, THE GIRL GOT AWAY... BUT THE GRASHOPPER MAN GOT SQUASHED LIKE THIS!
THEN QWAN ATE HIM.


!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, TEIKOU?
THAT'S...

...ARE YOU FOND OF MONEY?
BY THE WAY, MASTER CHIKEI...
?
.....
HMM... GOOD ANSWER.
WELL... I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST IT! THE MORE THE BETTER, RIGHT?
HERE IT COMES!
..THEY SAY DEMONS HAVE BEEN APPEARING IN THIS TOWN LATELY
REALLY? WHAT KIND?
WELL, LEAVING THAT TOPIC ASIDE FOR A MOMENT
??

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEMONS THAT FEED ON HUMAN DESIRE... BUT THERE'S A CERTAIN *TYPE* OF DESIRE THAT DEMONS PREFER.
AH - EX-CUSE ME
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT
THIS OLD MAN IS ONE NASTY DRUNK.
OH, REALLY? WHAT KIND OF DESIRE?
...THE DESIRE FOR *POWER*.
THE DESIRE TO BE ABOVE ALL HUMAN BEINGS...

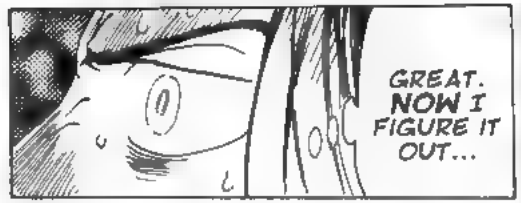
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT, THEN JUST AT LUNCH TODAY--
OH--YOU MEAN THOSE STOMACH WORMS?
DEMONS THAT FEED ON *DESIRE*.
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT LOW-LEVEL DEMONS LIKE THOSE!!

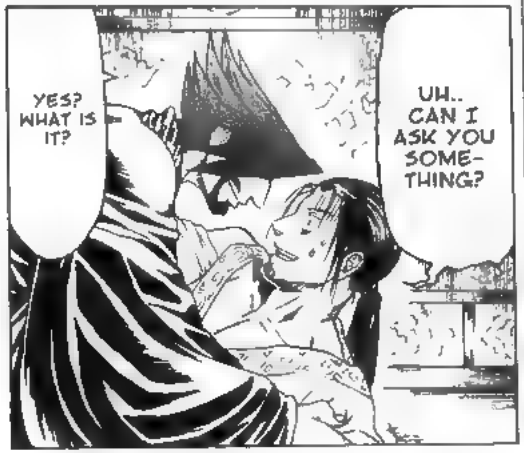
DO THEY, LIKE, TURN INTO TRUE, UNCOR-RUPTED PEOPLE?
WH-WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PEOPLE AFTER THEIR DESIRES ARE EATEN?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND OUT?

LIKE HELL I WOULD !!

...DELICIOUS.
ESPECIALLY AMBITION HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN. IT'S...


GREAT. NOW I FIGURE IT OUT...


YES? WHAT IS IT?
UH.. CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?

AHAHA
QWAN!!
HELP!!!

DAKI!!
!!

HA
HA
PFT!
...I'M... SAFE...?
I...

IT'S ALL RIGHT.
THIS WILL ONLY HURT AT FIRST.

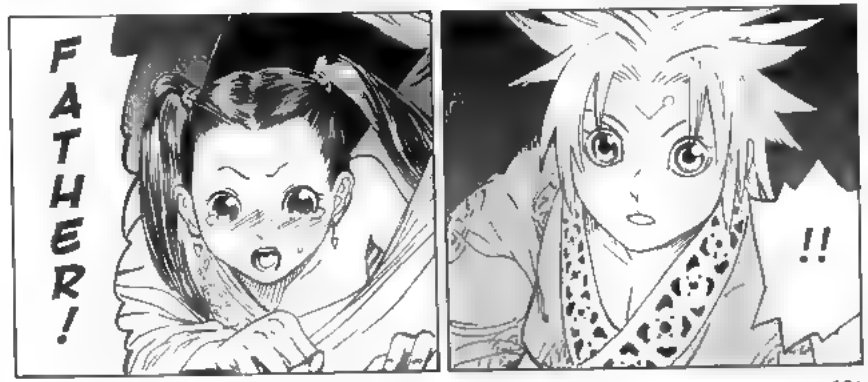
HIHHH...

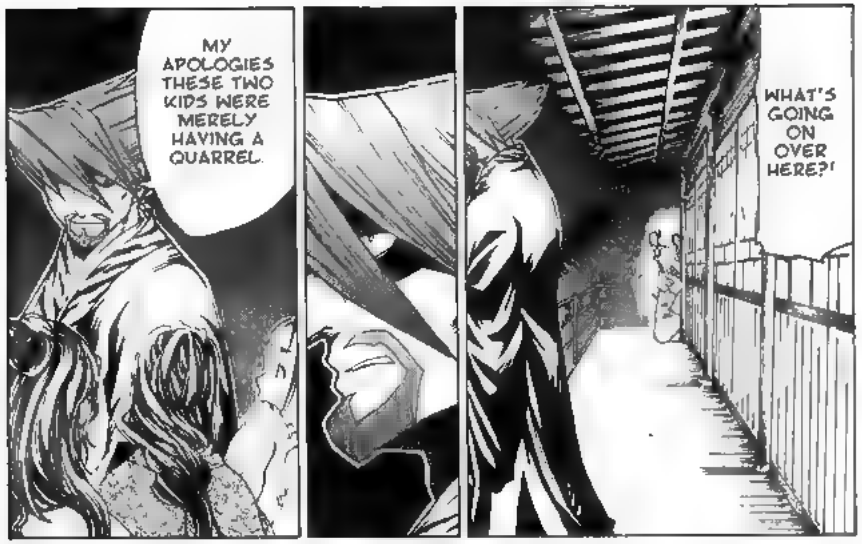
I FINALLY FOUND YOU!! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?!

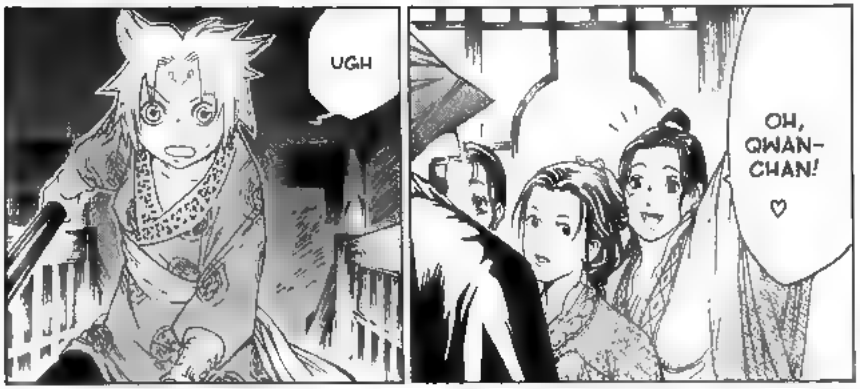
I...I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!!

WHY.. YOU..!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING...
...WITH MY DAUGHTER?!!


FATHER!
!!


MY APOLOGIES THESE TWO KIDS WERE MERELY HAVING A QUARREL
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER HERE?!

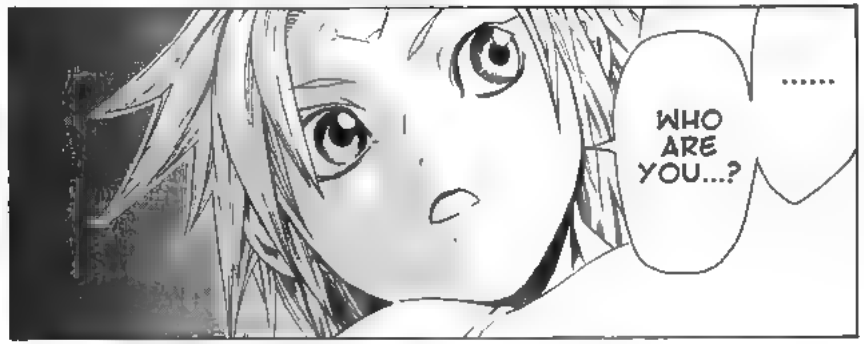

UGH
OH, QWAN-CHAN! ♡

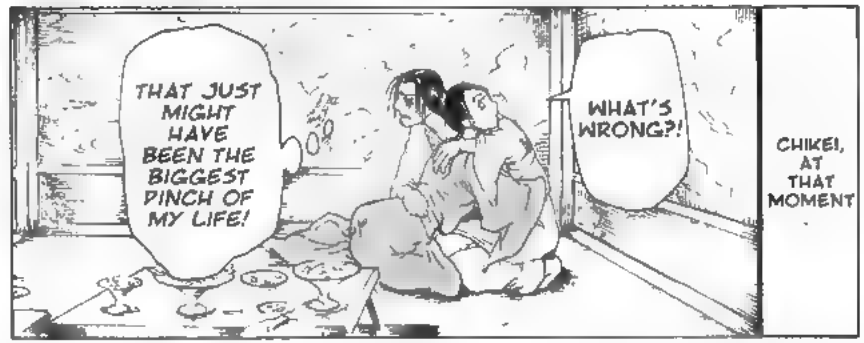
AH!

QWAN, WAS IT? WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.
AND THANKS TO HER...I'VE ENCOUNTERED SOMEONE INTRIGUING.
QWAN-CHAN! ♡
WAIT-- I GET IT! YOU'RE THE DE--
NOPE! 'FRAID NOT! ♡
HE'S GETTING AWAY!
L-LEMME GO!

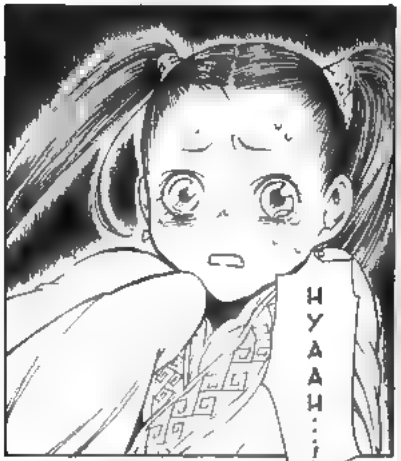
JUST BECAUSE THE PROSTITUTES ARE NOT TO YOUR TASTE DOES NOT GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO LAY A HAND ON MY DAUGHTER.
YES... SHE CAME HERE BECAUSE SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT ME.
LORD YUUSHI-- IS THIS YOUR DAUGHTER?
.....

DON'T TRY TO EAT HIM YET, QWAN.
!


.....
WHO ARE YOU...?

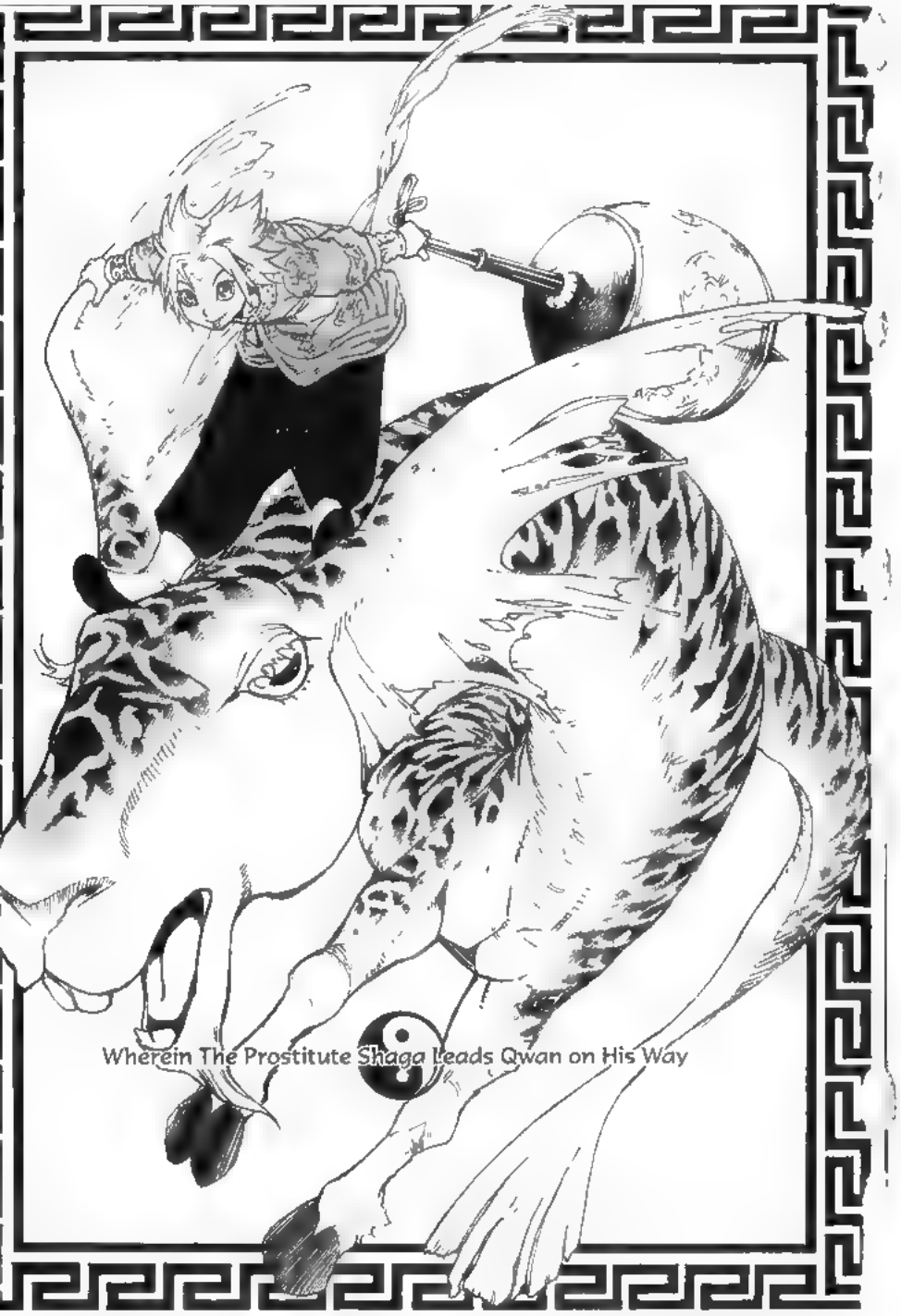

THAT JUST MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST PINCH OF MY LIFE!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
CHIKEI, AT THAT MOMENT

...I'M SORRY.
FATHER... UMM...

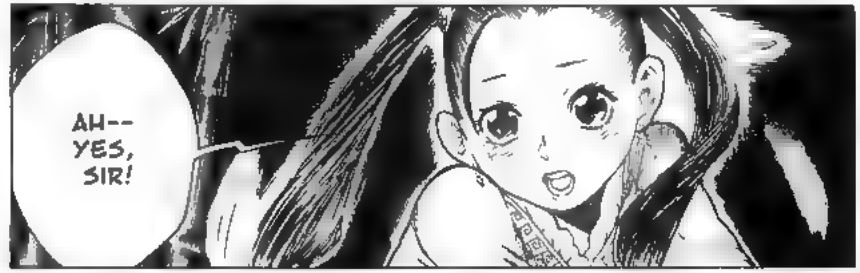

HYAAH...!

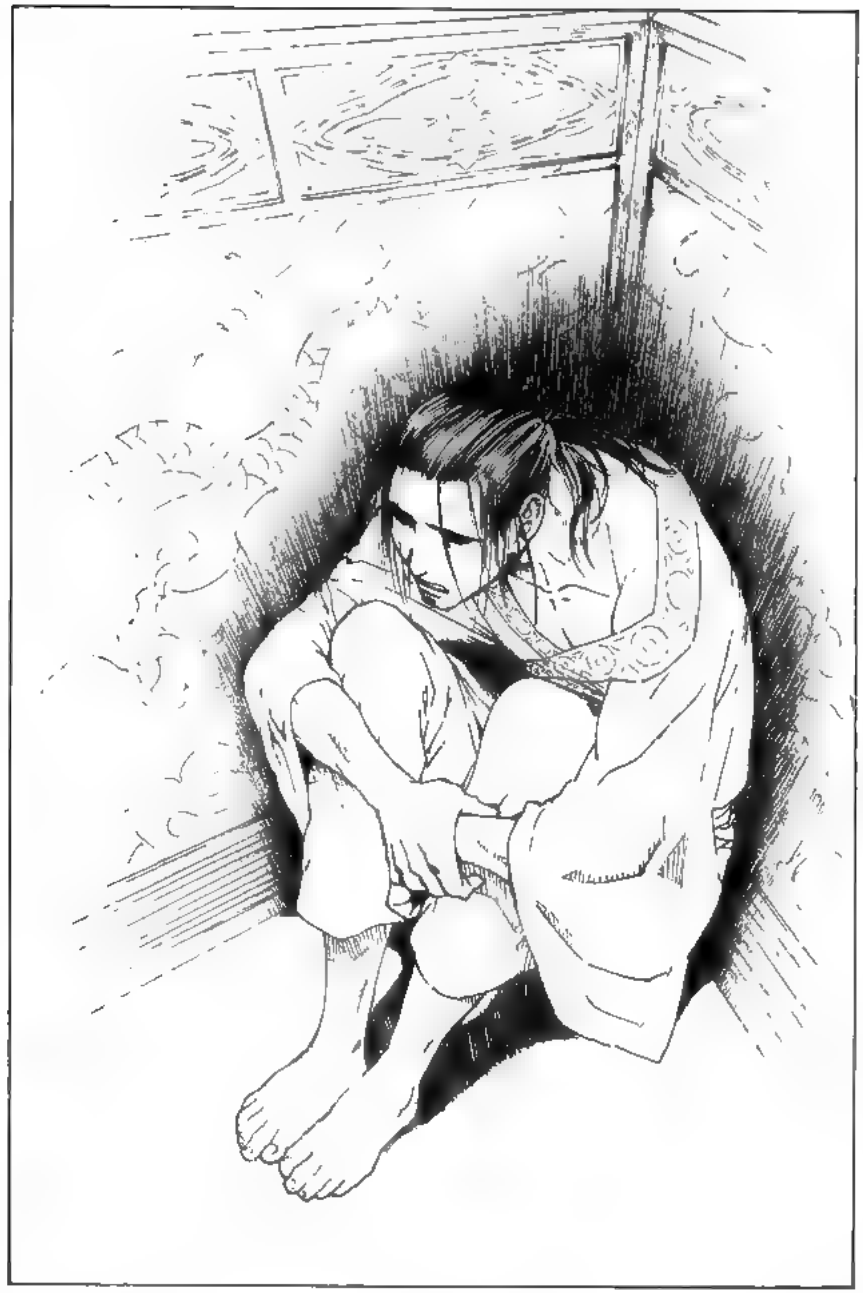
WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME?!
THE TWO THINGS I HATE MOST IN THIS WORLD..
YOU KNOW THAT!
...ARE LIARS AND GIRLS WHO OMIT INFOR-MATION!
I'M S-SORRY!!

HMPH OH, WELL.
IN ANY CASE, NOW THAT THEY'VE SEEN YOUR ABILITY, WE'LL HAVE TO FINISH THE BOTH OF THEM OFF.
ドン!!
Y-YES SIR.
YES, SIR...
I'VE ALREADY PLACED A SPY.
YOU CAN'T CATCH WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE



Wherein The Prostitute Shaga Leads Qwan on His Way





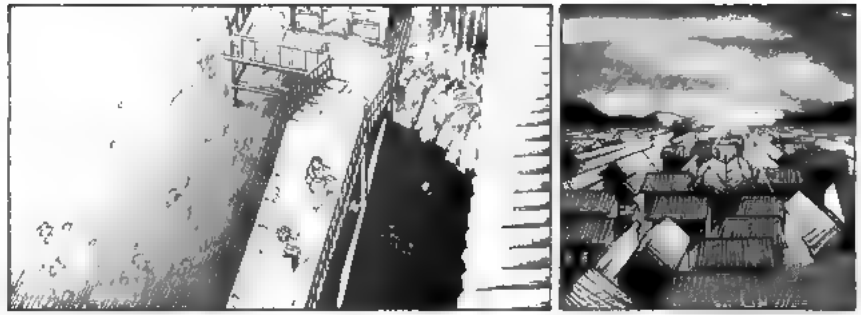
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT .
...EVER SINCE I STARTED TRAVELING WITH OWAN, WEIRD PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SHOWING UP
OR MAYBE THINGS THAT WEREN'T HUMAN HAVE BEEN AROUND ME ALL THIS TIME, AND I JUST NEVER REALIZED IT.
ぐっ
ぷっ
ULP!
AND NOW THAT BEARDED GUY—
ESPECIALLY AMBITION HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN IT'S
UH, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
ESP WHAT IS IT?
BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST! I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!

ん？…

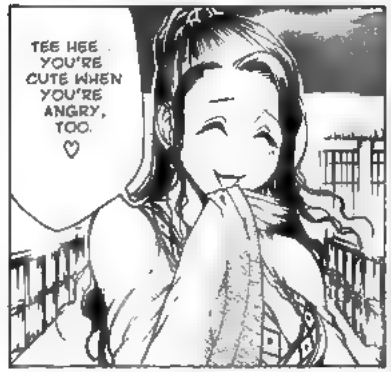
QWAN! LET'S HEAD BACK!
WHAT'S QWAN DOING THERE...?

ハラ…

HELLO, TEIKOU.



YOU! WHAT DO YOU KNOW?!


TEE HEE YOU'RE CUTE WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY, TOO. ♡

ANSWER ME!!

OH, THE SUN IS UP!

.....
QWAN!! FORGET ABOUT TEIKOU AND RUN!!
...GIHH!
HUH?
U---
UWAH!!

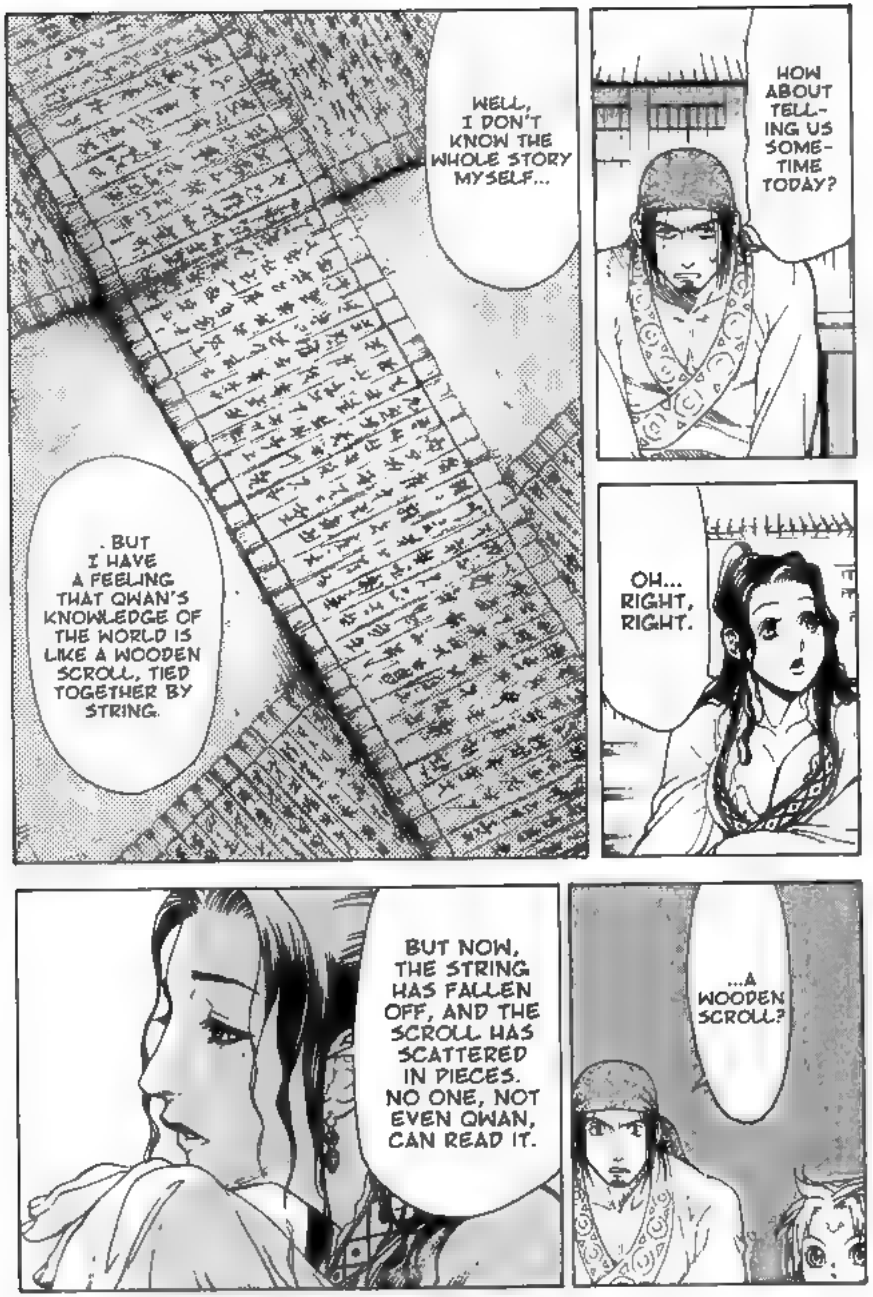
ぱっ
DON'T TELL ME SHE'S ONE OF THEM TOO?!
AH!!
OH, MY-- NAUGHTY BOY! ♡
TEIKOU?!

JUST WHO ARE YOU...?

MY NAME IS SHAGA.
JUST YOUR AVERAGE LADY OF THE NIGHT.

HOW BORING.
YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA ABOUT QWAN, DO YOU?
ヘヘヘ
どげしゃっ

BUT THERE MAY STILL BE A REASON THAT YOU AND QWAN MET.
VERY WELL. I'LL TELL YOU A TINY BIT...
...OF QWAN-CHAN'S SECRET. ♡


WELL, I DON'T KNOW THE WHOLE STORY MYSELF...
HOW ABOUT TELL-ING US SOME-TIME TODAY?
. BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT QWAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD IS LIKE A WOODEN SCROLL, TIED TOGETHER BY STRING.
OH... RIGHT, RIGHT.
BUT NOW, THE STRING HAS FALLEN OFF, AND THE SCROLL HAS SCATTERED IN PIECES. NO ONE, NOT EVEN QWAN, CAN READ IT.
...A WOODEN SCROLL?

AHEM!
WHY DOES TEIKOU LIKE THAT WOMAN SO MUCH?
TEIKOU'S MINE, JUST SO YOU KNOW!!
SITTING HERE LIKE THIS, WE ALMOST LOOK LIKE A REGULAR FAMILY!

?
?
MY POWER... MY PURPOSE...

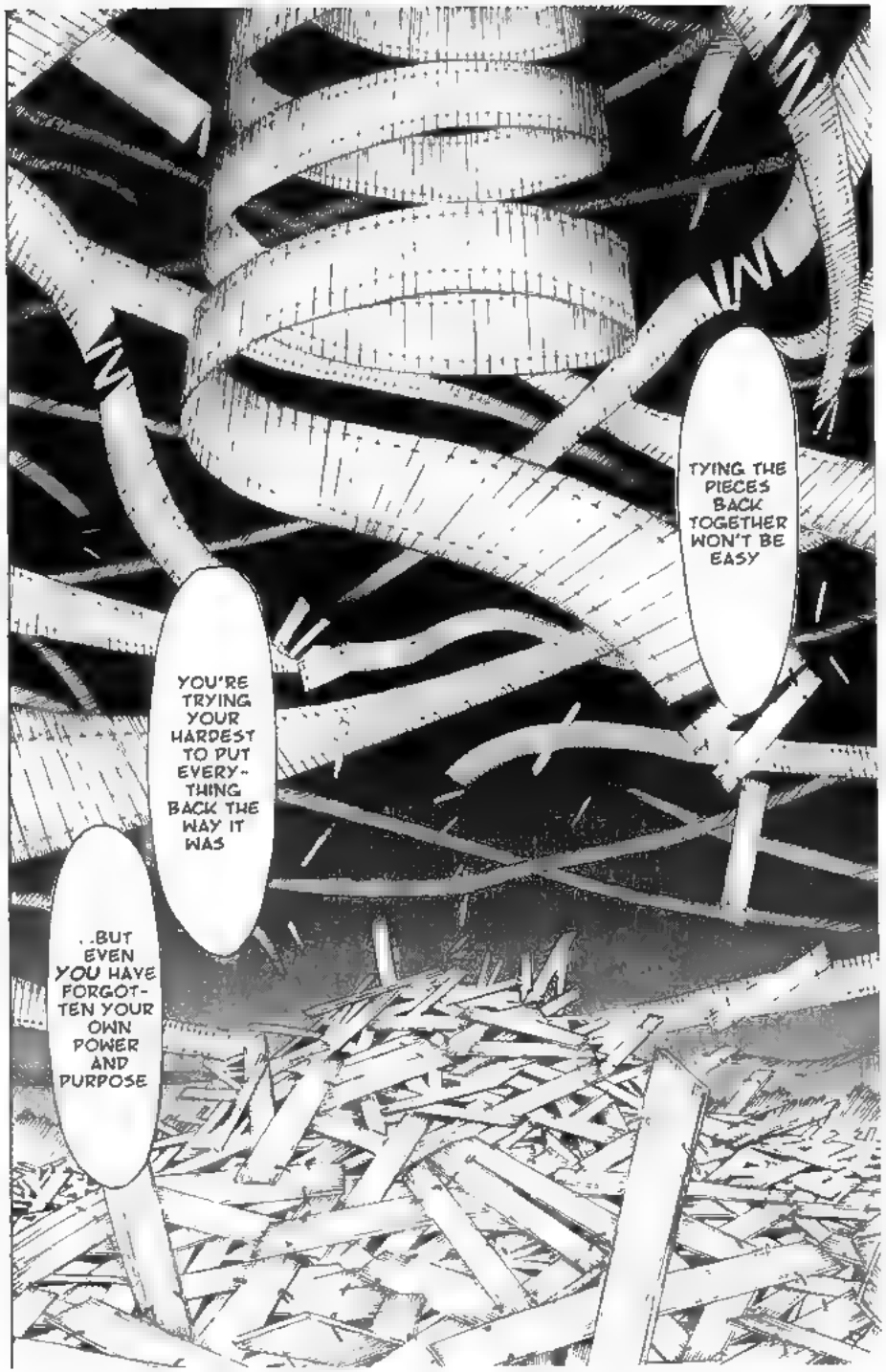
YOU MIGHT THEN BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT IT IS YOU ARE TO DO.
IT MAY BE WISE TO GIVE SOME THOUGHT AS TO WHY YOU'RE HERE...IN THIS PLACE AND TIME

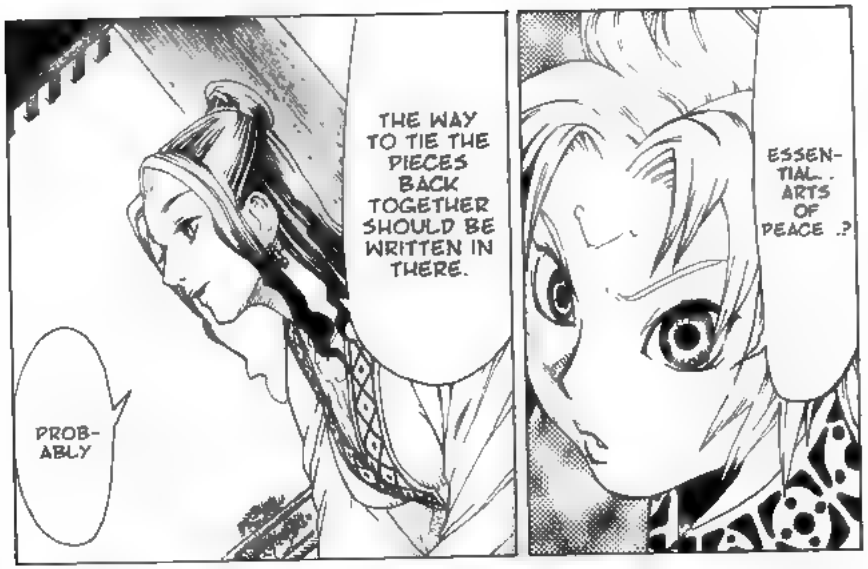
AND I'VE ONLY HEARD OF IT IN RUMORS, SO I HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER IT'S TRUE OR NOT
IT'S JUST NOT SOME-THING THAT'S EASY TO GET YOUR HANDS ON.

WELL... IT'S NOT THAT A WAY DOESN'T EXIST... BUT ..

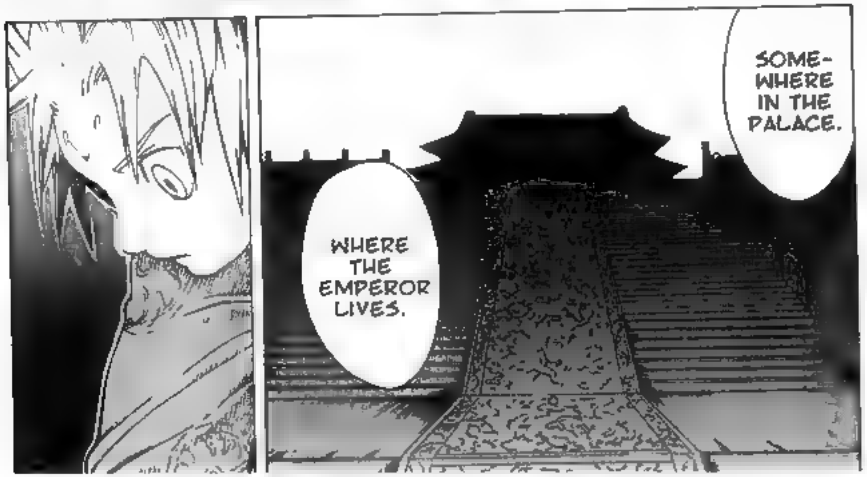
SPIT IT OUT!!

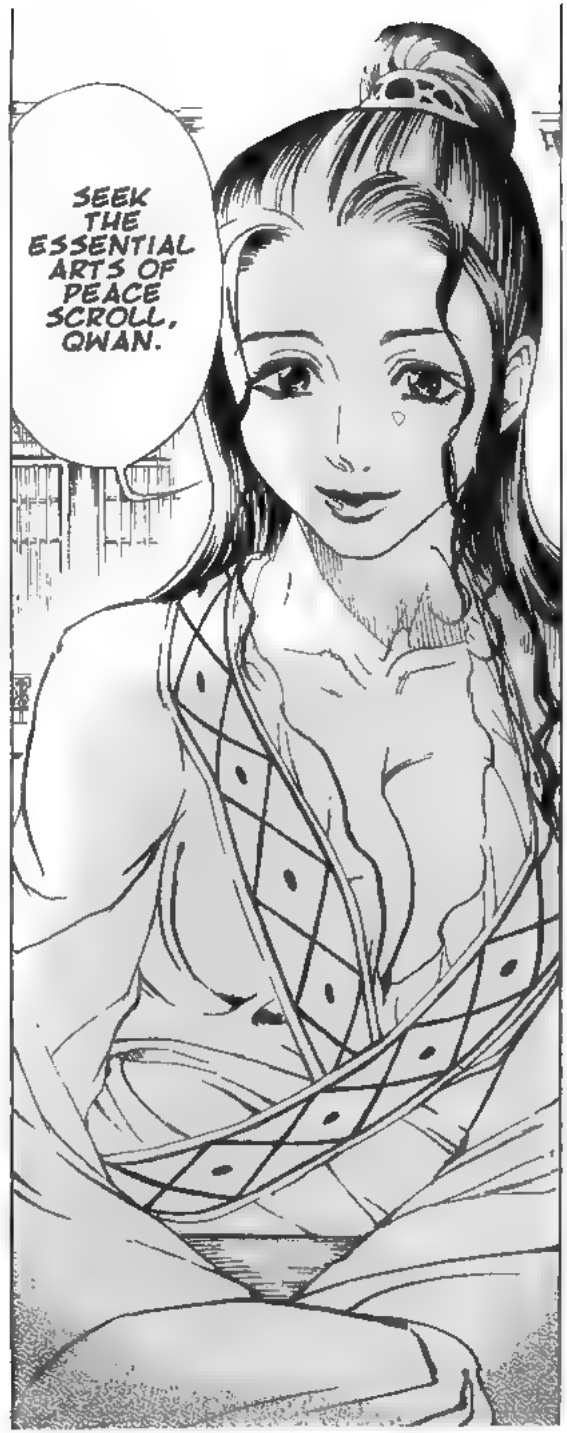
SO IS THERE ANY WAY TO PUT IT BACK TOGETHER ALL AT ONCE?!


TYING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER WON'T BE EASY
YOU'RE TRYING YOUR HARDEST TO PUT EVERY-THING BACK THE WAY IT WAS
..BUT EVEN YOU HAVE FORGOT-TEN YOUR OWN POWER AND PURPOSE


THE WAY TO TIE THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN THERE.
PROB-ABLY
ESSEN-TIAL ARTS OF PEACE ..?

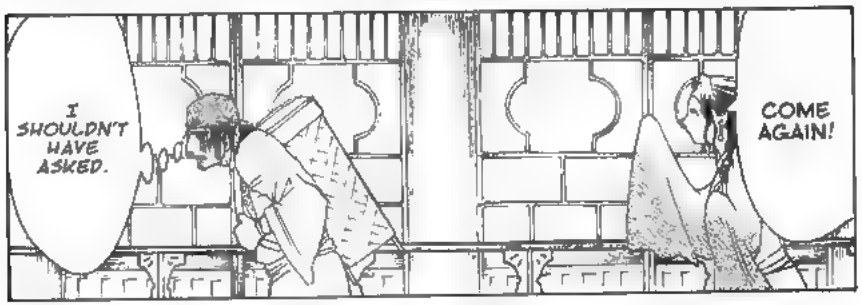
BUT WHERE IS IT?!

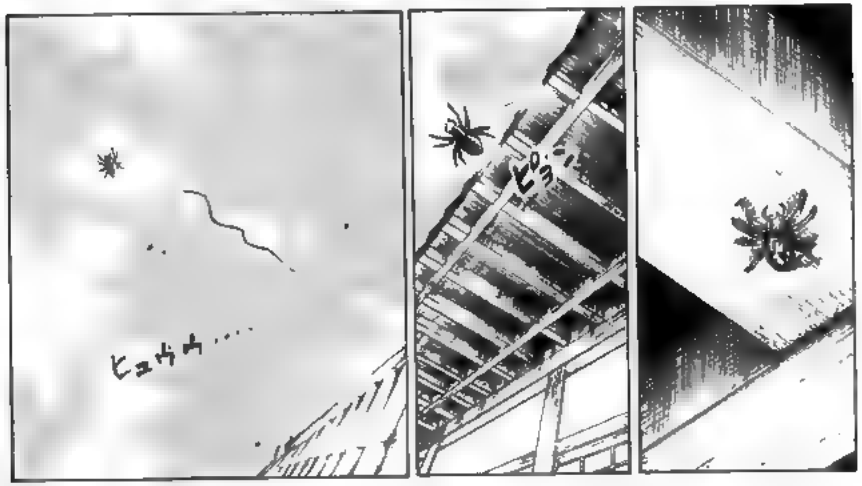

WHERE THE EMPEROR LIVES.
SOME-WHERE IN THE PALACE.


SEEK THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE SCROLL, QWAN.

JUST TELL ME WHAT IT IS ALREADY!!

A REGULAR CUSTOMER HERE AT THE BROTHEL.
ONE WHO PAYS VERY WELL.
AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S TAKEN QUITE A LIKING TO YOU.


COME AGAIN!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED.

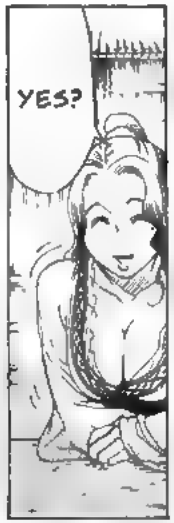

ヒュウ…
ピョン!

DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE THE PALACE IS?!

JEEZ

LET'S GO, TEIKOU!!
AH-- HEY!
WAIT!!

THAT YUUSHI GUY... WHAT IS HE?


YES?

UH, EXCUSE ME.. I DIDN'T GET A LOT OF WHAT YOU SAID
BUT COULD I ASK YOU SOMETHING?

THAT SHAGA... SHE TOLD THEM QUITE A BIT.
WHAT?!

O CHILD WITH THE NAME OF WIDOWER...

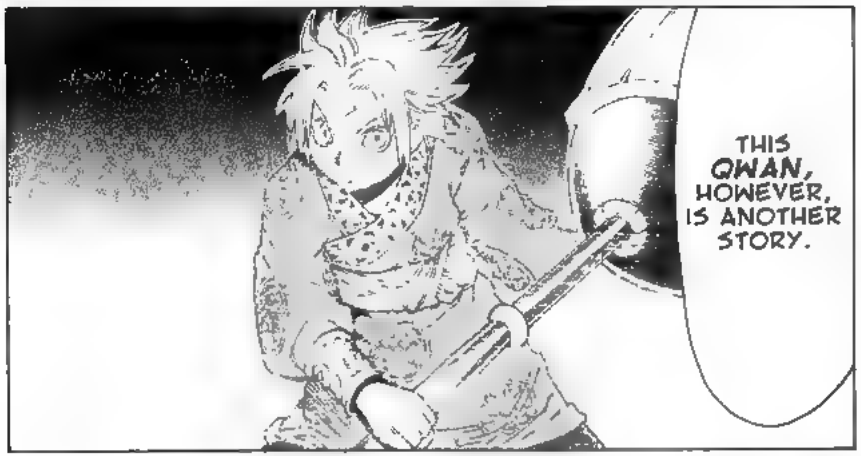
GWAN
..WIDOWER

...WHERE IS YOUR BRIDE, I WONDER...?

THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE ONLY GAINS MEANING WHEN IN THE HANDS OF SOMEONE WORTHY.
THE EMPEROR--A MERE HUMAN--HAS NO USE FOR IT.

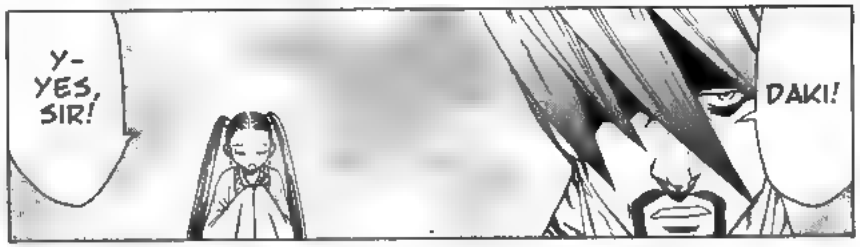
I SEE EXACTLY THE KIND OF INFORMATION I SENT YOU TO THE GRAND MARSHAL'S TO RETRIEVE.

B-BUT WE STILL HAVE NO MEANS OF OBTAINING IT


THIS QWAN, HOWEVER, IS ANOTHER STORY.

WE MUST NOT HESITATE.

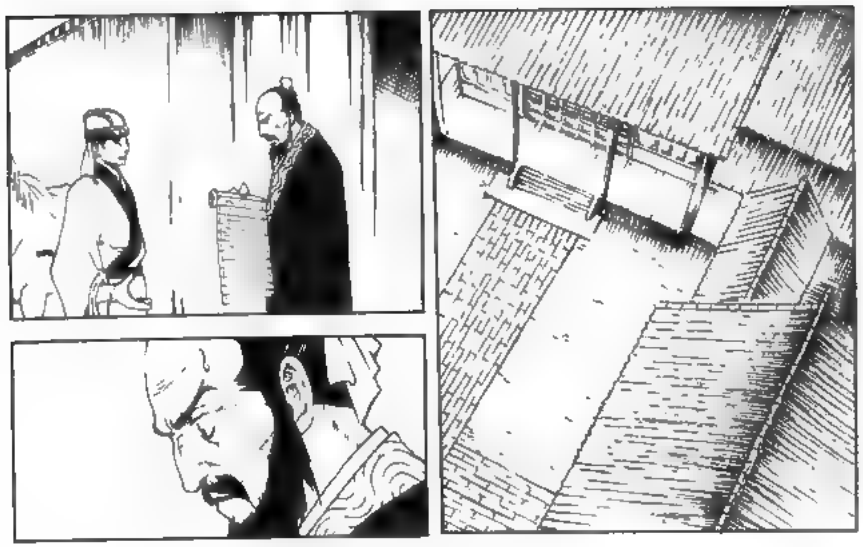
THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE, COMPILED BY THE HERMIT UKITSU FROM THE EASTERN MOUNTAINS.
A SCROLL THAT EXPLAINS THE MYSTERIES OF ALL CREATION--IN OTHER WORDS, THE POWER TO MANIPULATE HEAVEN AND EARTH.
THEY SAY THAT IF ONE WERE TO POSSESS IT, CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE WOULD BE WITHIN HIS GRASP.

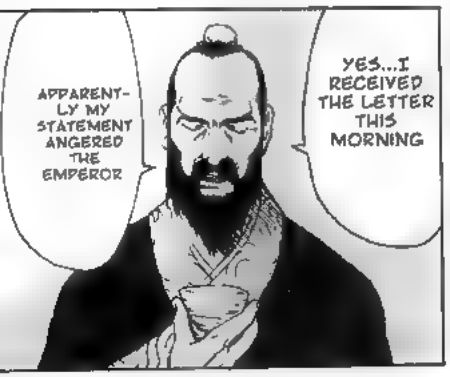

DAKI!
Y-YES, SIR!

UMM...THE SCROLL HAS LEFT THE HANDS OF JOU KAI, AND IS NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF THE EMPEROR.

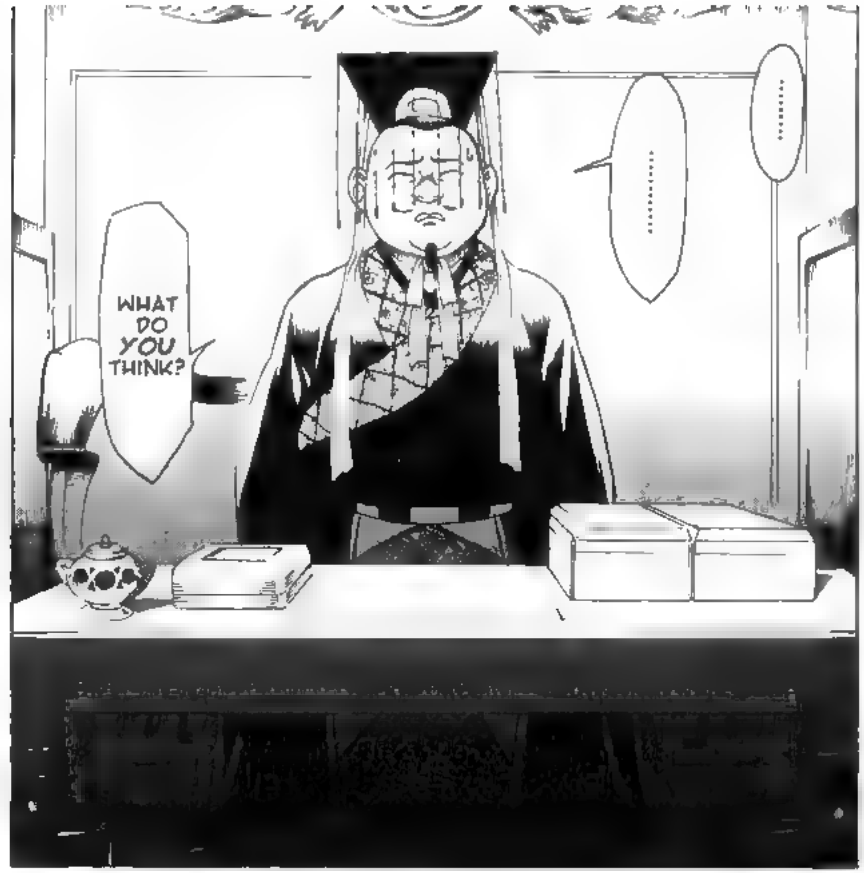
-LUOYANG-
WHILE COMMANDER RIYOU, BEING A CITIZEN OF CHINA, SHOULD BE PARDONED...
..FOR THE NUMEROUS CRIMES HE COMMITTED UP THROUGH HIS TEENS.
.SOMETHING LIKE THIS, IMPRISONMENT BASED UPON FALSE CHARGES, IS A THREAT TO THE EMPEROR THAT SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY AND LIBERALLY PUNISHED.
THIS IS THE OPINION OF GRAND MARSHAL CHIN BAN.

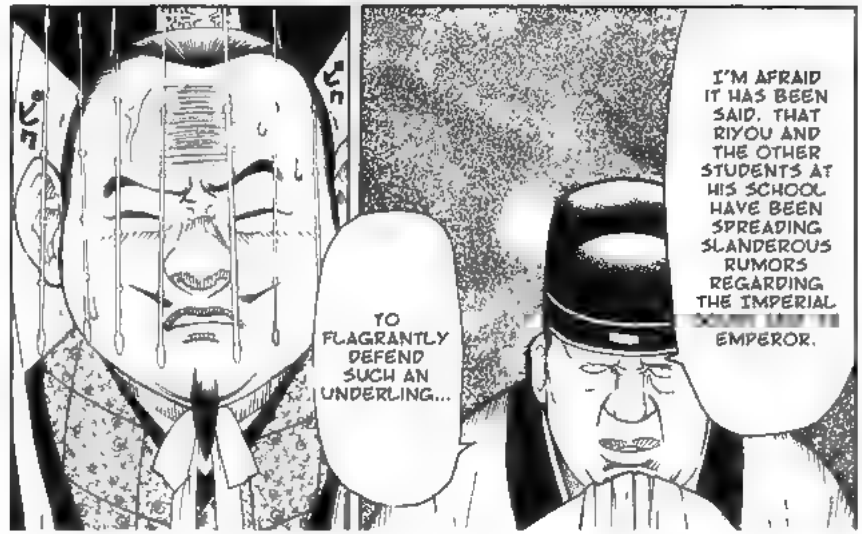
GREAT YELLOW RIVER!
ONE DAY, YOU SHALL FLOW AT MY WHIM!
.....

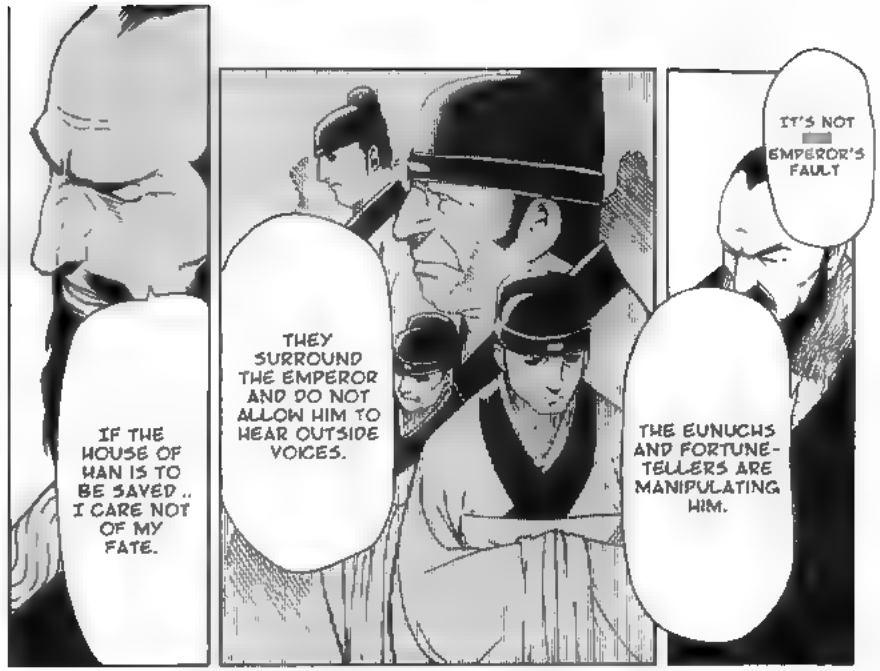




*JOU KAI IS REFERRING TO RIYOU AND THE OTHER DEFENDANT BY THEIR ALTERNATE NAMES.




TO FLAGRANTLY DEFEND SUCH AN UNDERLING...
I'M AFRAID IT HAS BEEN SAID, THAT RIYOU AND THE OTHER STUDENTS AT HIS SCHOOL HAVE BEEN SPREADING SLANDEROUS RUMORS REGARDING THE IMPERIAL [redacted] EMPEROR.


IF THE HOUSE OF HAN IS TO BE SAVED .. I CARE NOT OF MY FATE.
THEY SURROUND THE EMPEROR AND DO NOT ALLOW HIM TO HEAR OUTSIDE VOICES.
THE EUNUCHS AND FORTUNE-TELLERS ARE MANIPULATING HIM.
IT'S NOT EMPEROR'S FAULT
LORD CHUUKYO...
OH--THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE?
BY THE WAY .. I HEAR YOU PRESENTED A SACRED SCROLL TO THE EMPEROR.

IT IS A SIGN OF HIS IMPENDING DECLINE THAT HE WILL NEVER SEE OR HEAR THE VERY THING THAT CAN WARN HIM OF HIS SITUATION.
WITH THE EMPEROR'S EYES AND EARS BLOCKED BY THE EUNUCHS, IT WILL NEVER REACH HIS HANDS.
IT WILL NOT REACH HIM.
IT IS AS IF THE PALACE IS DELIBERATELY MOVING TOWARD ITS OWN DOOM

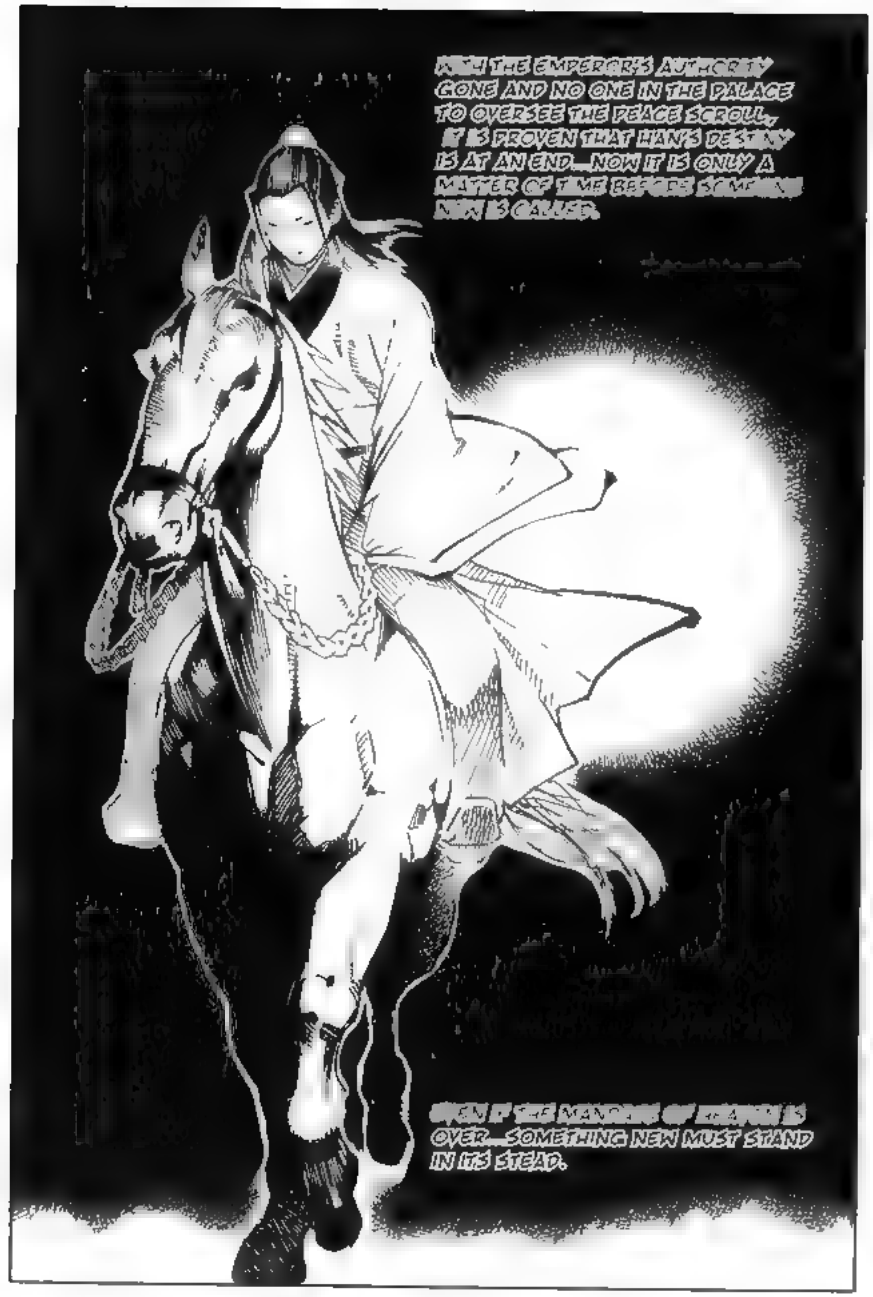
THE STARS IN THE HEAVENS HAVE STIRRED IN A WAY NEVER BEFORE WITNESSED
UNLESS I HURRY, EVEN I WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO READ THE STARS

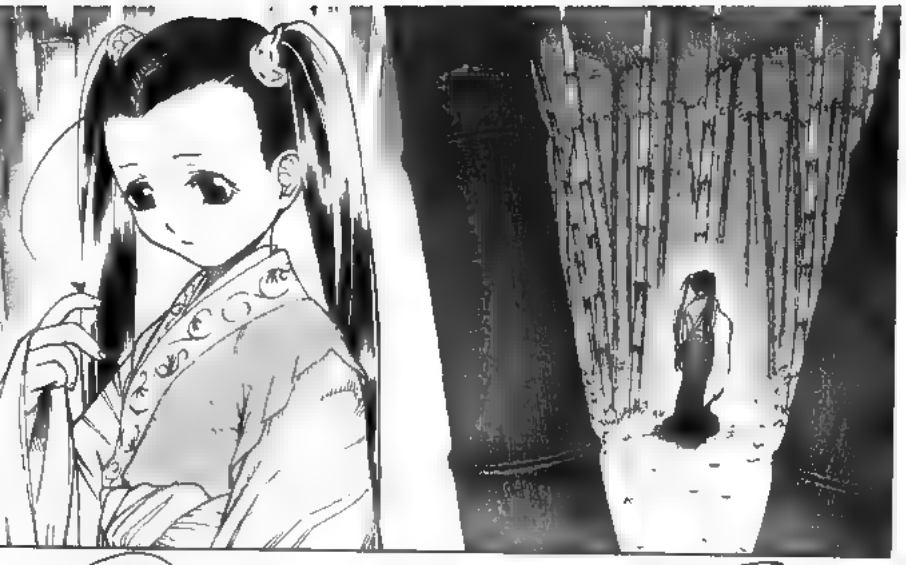
I CANNOT LEAVE THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE, PASSED DOWN BY OKTSU, TO LIE IN STORAGE FOREVER INSIDE THE PALACE.

...THE ONE WHO WILL GAIN CONTROL OF HAN. I MUST FIND HIM!
THE ONE WITH THE RIGHT TO HOLD THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE...

SO HEAVEN REALLY HAS FAVORED LIU...
I HAVE OWED MY LOYALTY TO THE HOUSE OF HAN FOR SO LONG. AND JUST LIKE THAT, IT IS OVER.
HOW UNEMOTIONAL IT HAS PROVEN

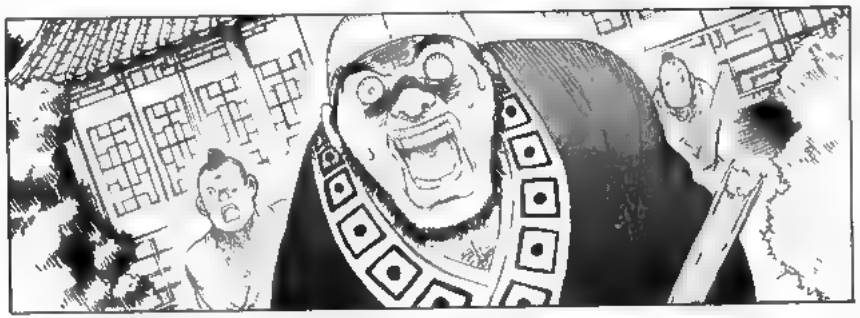
チュウカン

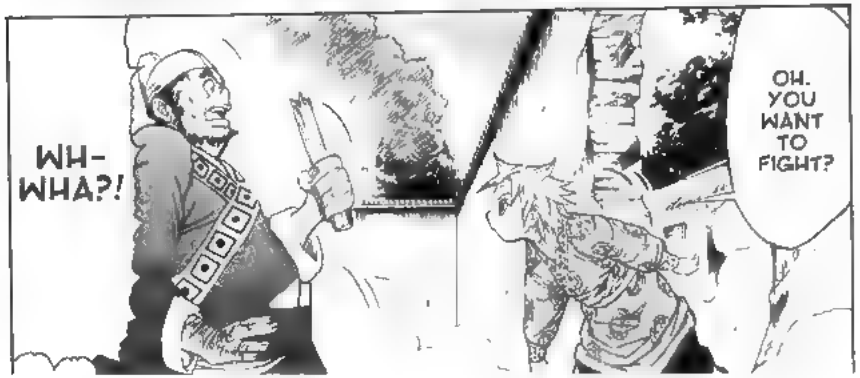

WITH THE EMPEROR'S AUTHORITY GONE AND NO ONE IN THE PALACE TO OVERSEE THE PEACE SCROLL, IT IS PROVEN THAT HAN'S DESTINY IS AT AN END...NOW IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SOMETHING NEW IS CALLED.
AND THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN IS OVER...SOMETHING NEW MUST STAND IN ITS STEAD.

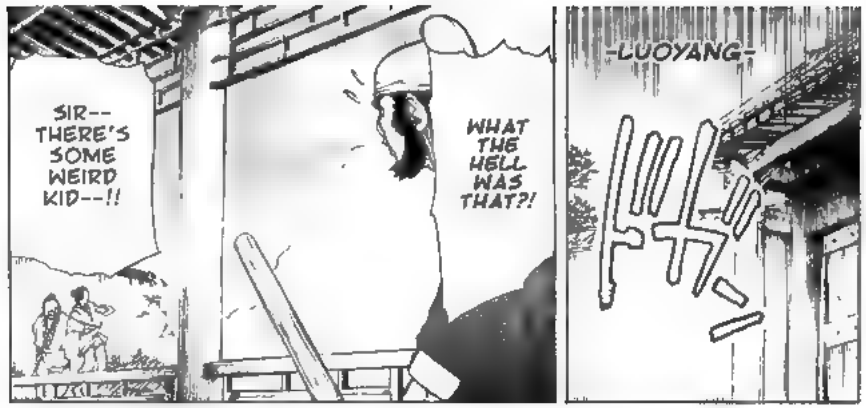


...BUT THIS IS FOR THE SAKE OF MY FATHER.
I'M SORRY TO BE SENDING YOU ON SUCH A DANGEROUS MISSION...
...
I DON'T CARE IF FATHER YELLS AT ME.
AND IF THINGS GET TOO DANGEROUS, LEAVE RIGHT AWAY
COME BACK SOON!

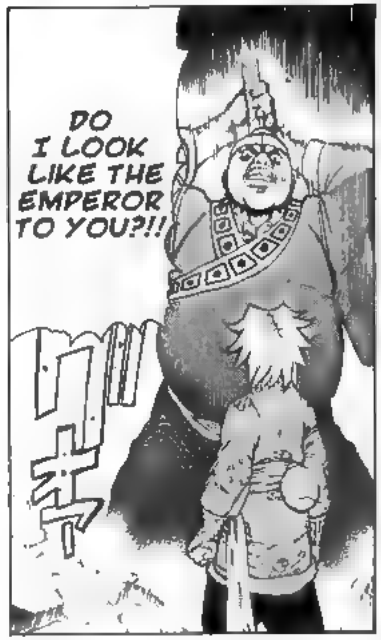
Wherein Qwan Searches for the Peace Scroll in Luoyang



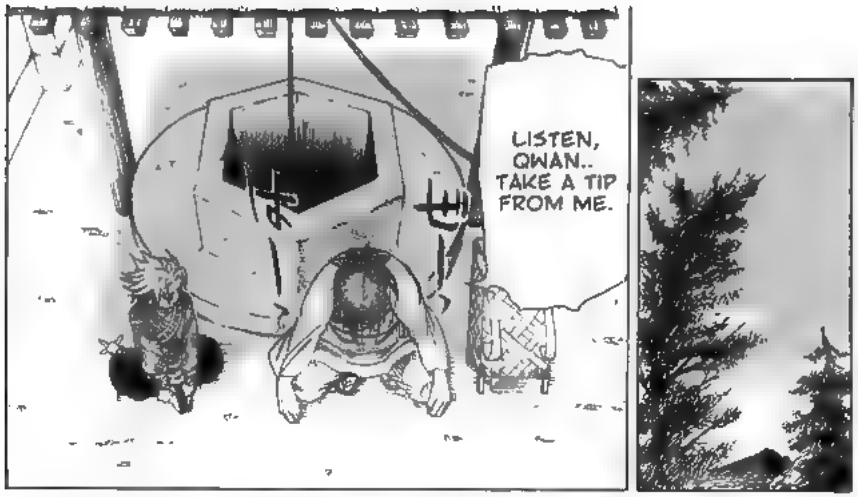

WH-WHA?!
OH. YOU WANT TO FIGHT?


SIR-- THERE'S SOME WEIRD KID--!!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!
-LUOYANG-

HUHHH?


DO I LOOK LIKE THE EMPEROR TO YOU?!!

IS THIS THE PALACE?


LISTEN, QWAN.. TAKE A TIP FROM ME.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE PLACE THE EMPEROR LIVES!
...YOU CAN'T JUST FORCE YOUR WAY IN AND TAKE IT!
WHETHER OR NOT YOU KNOW THIS ARTS OF WHATEVER SCROLL IS IN THE PALACE...

THEN WHAT AM I SUP-POSED TO DO?!

BESIDES-- DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN FIND ONE SCROLL IN SUCH A RIDICULOUSLY LARGE PALACE?

IT'S PROBABLY GUARDED BY THOU-SANDS EVEN TENS OF THOU-SANDS OF SOLDIERS!

Y-Y-Y-Y-YOU MORON!! WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO GO OVER-BOARD LIKE THAT?!
CHIKE!!

...???

ALL RIGHT!
THEN I WILL CATCH THIS CAO JIE DEMON!!

FINE! WHATEVER HAPPENS TO YOU, IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS! IF YOU'RE GONNA MESS WITH THE EMPEROR.

W-WAIT!! QWAN!!

HEY! WHERE THE HELL DID YOU GET THAT IDEA?!

I MEAN, I SUPPOSE IF YOU HAD THE FAVOR OF THE CHIEF EUNUCH, LORD CAO JIE, NOTHING WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. BUT STILL...

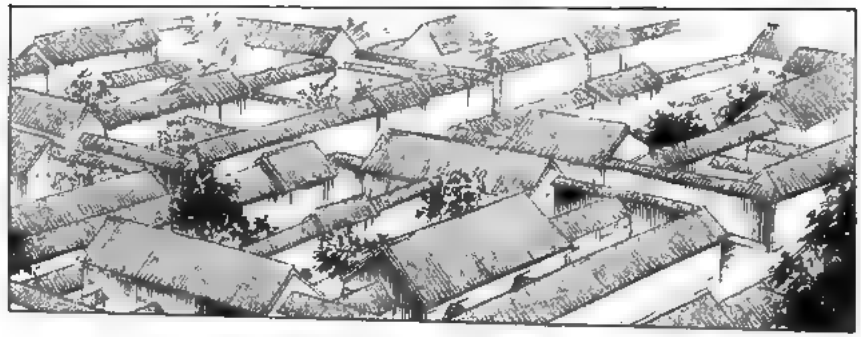
REGULAR PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME CAN'T GET ANYWHERE NEAR THE PALACE GATE!
NOTHING! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

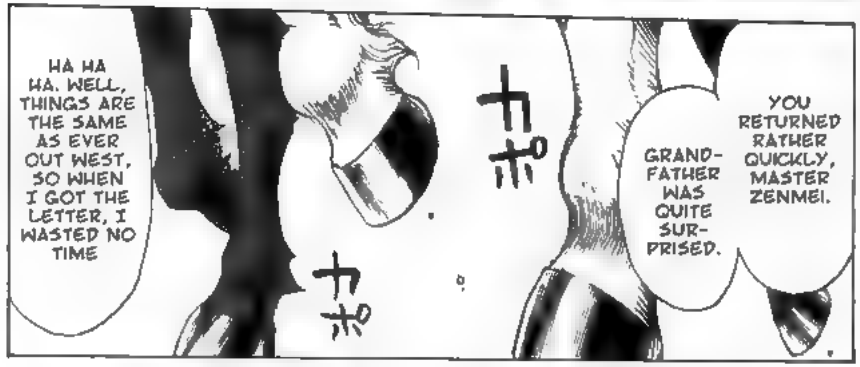
WHAT'S A "Y'KNOW"?
GUYS WHO ARE DIFFERENT DOWN THERE.
OH, YOU DON'T KNOW EUNUCHS ARE PEOPLE WHO'VE HAD THEIR, Y'KNOW... CUT OFF.
CHIEF EUNUCH?

UM-MMM

GUYS WHO'VE CUT THEIR THINGS OFF...AND NOW THEY'RE FLOPPING AROUND ON THE FLOOR.
HUH? WELL.. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!

AND THEN THERE'S THE ACADEMY APPARENTLY, 30,000 STUDENTS HAVE PROTESTED AGAINST THE EUNUCHS
THE EUNUCHS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FINISH PURGING THE PARTY MEMBERS OUT OF OFFICE.
TRUE BUT THE PARTY MEMBERS BELIEVE THEIR BEING CHASED OUT OF PUBLIC SERVICE IS A SIGN OF THE "CLEAR STREAM" AND THEY ARE GLAD OF IT




HA HA HA. WELL, THINGS ARE THE SAME AS EVER OUT WEST, SO WHEN I GOT THE LETTER, I WASTED NO TIME
GRAND-FATHER WAS QUITE SUR-PRISED.
YOU RETURNED RATHER QUICKLY, MASTER ZENMEI.

I HEARD GRAND MARSHAL CHIN WAS STRIPPED OF HIS TITLE AND EDUCATION MARSHAL LEE WAS ARRESTED.
YES...THE EUNUCHS ARE MOUNTING AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PARTIES.
NOW THAT I'M BACK, THE CAPITAL SURE IS A LOT MORE BUSTLING THAN THE OUTSKIRTS.

OHHH-- THAT'S THE HEIR TO THE CAO FAMILY!
ARE YOU ON YOUR WAY HOME?
HEY, YOU.

WHAT A WASTE OF EFFORT!
Heh heh heh!
HEH...THOSE EUNUCHS. ALL THAT PURGING, AND THEY END UP *PLEASING* THEIR OPPONENTS.
I BELIEVE THE PARTY MEMBERS ARE THE ONES IN THE MOST DANGER RIGHT NOW.
GRAND-FATHER HAS SAID NOT TO UNDERESTI-MATE THE EUNUCHS... CONSUMED BY POWER AS THEY ARE.
I WONDER.
WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY BLOOD CONNECTION.. BUT YOU'RE DEFINITELY *HIS* GRAND-SON
OH?
AMAN . SOMETIMES I THINK *YOU'RE* SCARIER THAN THE EUNUCHS AND THE PARTY MEMBERS PUT TO-GETHER.
...

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE NAMED CAO JIE?
UH .. YOU WANT SOMETHING, LITTLE BOY?
フゥみゃ……?
MY GRANDFATHER ..A DEMON ?
DEMON?!
THERE'S THIS DEMON NAMED CAO JIE THAT I HAVE TO CATCH.

I CAN'T STAND PEOPLE WHO PUT CHIEF EUNUCH CAO ON THE SAME PAGE AS THE OTHER EUNUCHS!
HEY! DON'T EXPECT ME TO WALK AWAY FROM THAT!!
I, TOO-- CHOU KAN-- OWE MY OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HAN TO CHIEF EUNUCH CAO!
DURING THE REIGN OF THE LAST EMPEROR, CHIEF EUNUCH CAO ...WAS IN CHARGE OF THE PALACE FOR THIRTY YEARS! AND NEVER ONCE DID HE MAKE AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT! WE OWE OUR YEARS OF PROSPERITY AND ADVANCES IN GOVERNMENT AND MANPOWER TO HIM!!
AND HERE YOU COME ALONG, CALLING HIM A DEMON!

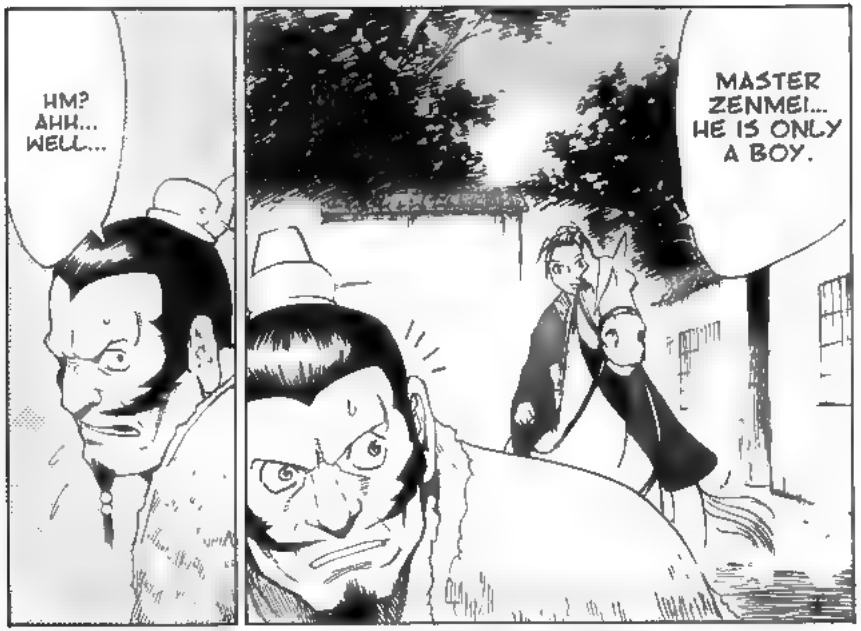
ドドド

?!
URGH!!
FOR SOME REASON, I'VE BEEN SENSING HER AROUND HERE...IS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION?

ナルミチアア…
YOU CAN'T BE HUMAN... WHAT ARE YOU?!

ARGH!!
AH!

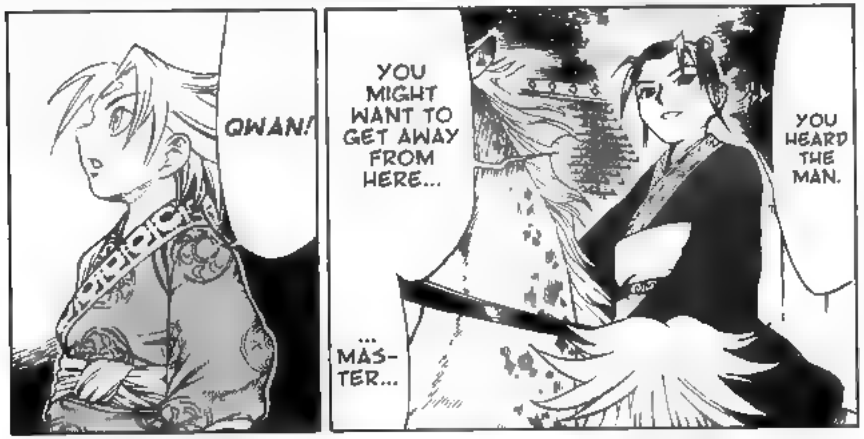
!
YOU'RE BEING REALLY ANNOYING, YOU KNOW THAT?!
カリキン


HM? AHH... WELL...
MASTER ZENMEI... HE IS ONLY A BOY.

...
I NEED HIM TO HELP ME GET THE ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE SCROLL FROM THE IMPERIAL PALACE.
YOU, THERE-- WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH CAO JIE WHEN YOU FIND HIM?

CUT IT OUT, CHOÚ KAN!!
GRRR.
GRR!!

THE POLICE ARE HERE!!


QWAN!
YOU MIGHT WANT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE...
...MAS-TER...
YOU HEARD THE MAN.

HM?!
UH-- AMAN!! IS THAT SUCH A GOOD IDEA?!
VERY WELL, QWAN. FOLLOW ME!

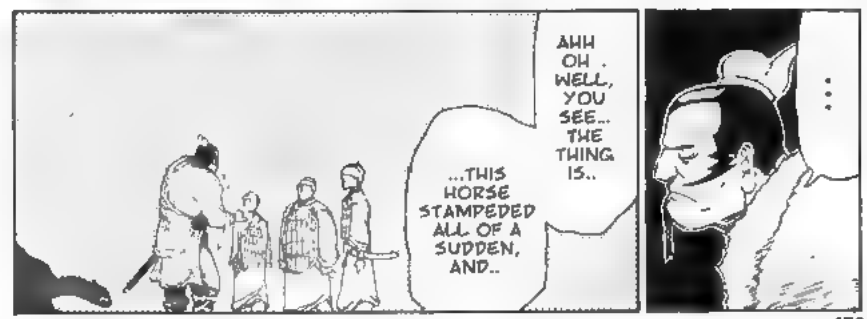
WHAT DO YOU WANT IT FOR?
ESSENTIAL ARTS OF PEACE...?

TO TIE THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

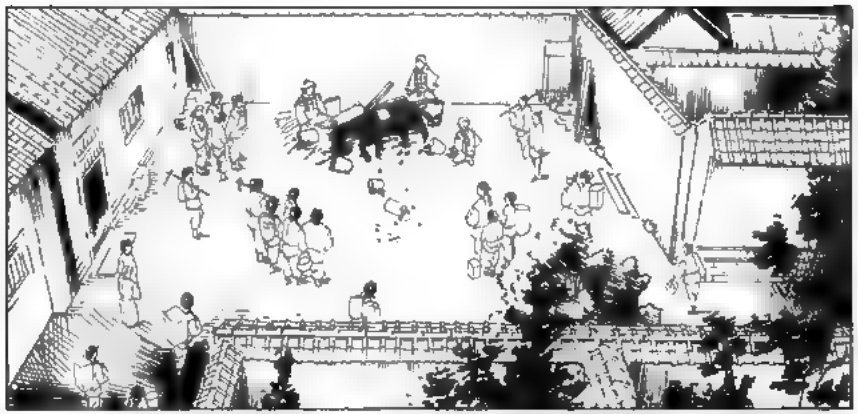
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

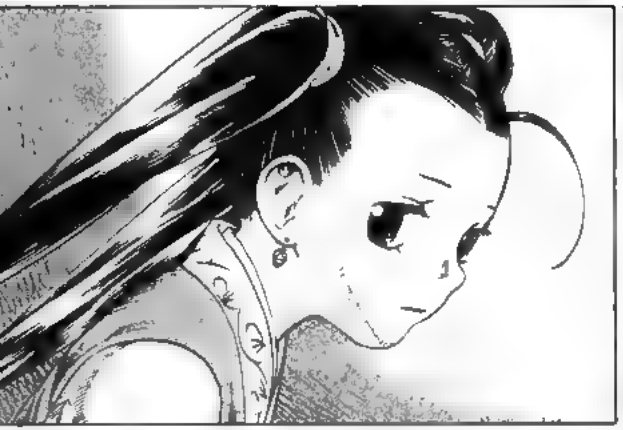
MASTER ZENME!! I WILL BE GOING ON AHEAD. PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THINGS HERE.

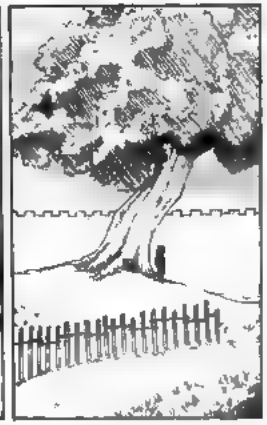
WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON HERE?!
AH! GEN-ERAL CHOU!!
HUH?! ME?!
HEY, WAIT!! AMAN!!


AHH OH . WELL, YOU SEE.. THE THING IS..
...THIS HORSE STAMPEDED ALL OF A SUDDEN, AND..
...

HM? OH, HOW RUDE OF ME.
SO WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
...

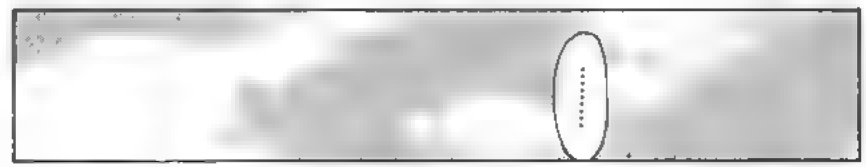






THEY CALL ME AMAN.

I SEE... AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?
YOU'LL SEE.


.....

I KNEW YOU WEREN'T STRONG ENOUGH, AND I SENT YOU ANYWAY...
I'M SORRY...
...I'M SO SORRY, YURITATSU.
DON'T CRY, LADY DAKI.

HAKUHIKO... SEISHI-GAKU...

BUT THAT QWAN BOY DOESN'T HAVE A PRAYER AGAINST THE TWO OF US.
IT'S UNDER-STAND-ABLE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.
KAIKOKUSEI AND YURITATSU WEREN'T EXPERIENCED AT FIGHTING.

IS THIS THE PALACE?
WE'VE ARRIVED.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
カポ
カポ
AMAN--OVER HERE!
MASTER ZENMEI HAS BEEN DETAINED. HE'LL ARRIVE LATER, HE SAID.
OH, I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME.
GRAND-FATHER!
THERE'S SOMEONE THERE!

LADY DAKI... GIVE US THE ORDER!
.....
YES, MY LADY!
BUT DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH.
ALL RIGHT. I'M COUNTING ON THE TWO OF YOU.

In the Second Chronicle of Qwan...

Getting into the palace is just the beginning! Insect Princess Daki and her minions are hot on Qwan's tail, and her formidable parents are not far behind. Add to this the treacherous eunuchs who guard the Peace Scroll and the legendary laziness of Chikei, and you've got one uphill battle for Qwan.

But more surprises lie in store. Daki's strange past will soon be revealed... along with a very interesting proposal...

SURNAME CAO, GIVEN NAME JIE, NICKNAME LEE HENG.
MY GRAND-FATHER.
To Be Continued...
BUT I DID BRING SOMEONE INTEREST-ING.
OH? THAT BOY, YOU MEAN?
YES.
I'M QWAN.
QWAN, ALLOW ME TO INTRO-DUCE YOU.

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